



## Welcome Back Bobby by RTVampireKilljoy

**Category:** IT

**Genre:** Horror, Supernatural

**Language:** English

**Status:** In-Progress

**Published:** 2018-01-21 21:04:07

**Updated:** 2019-08-21 00:03:45

**Packaged:** 2019-12-12 05:19:52

**Rating:** M

**Chapters:** 29

**Words:** 53,623

**Publisher:** [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

**Summary:** It is 1989 and the Losers have defeated Pennywise or so they believe. A man with no memories of the past year, wakes to find himself in a nightmare that doesn't want to end. What does IT have to do with all of this? (A fans take on how Bill Skarsgard's character in Castle Rock ties in with IT.)

# 1. Chapter 1

The dark endless void has never been kind. It takes the memories I should have and gobbles them up. Where time should tell me and remind me of what has transpired from a year or even more, the void smiles back and laughs. It doesn't sound like one of horrors, but instead of what should be of joy and fun times. Instead the laughter cracks and seeps deep into my bones. It sounds less and less of joyful times and more of torture and sanity fraying at the seams.

But instead of laughter, this time I am greeted with silence and pain. My whole being throbs as if I've been destroyed and rebuilt only to be torn apart again in a vicious cycle of who knows how long. The guilt that comes with waking with the feeling of fullness is lacking. All I feel is tired, hungry and a little less guilty if not oddly proud of being so run through.

I'm not where I usually wake from an episode. I had tried to guess in the past when they would occur. A pattern at times only to be disproven by a sudden black out the takes years of my life away. You'd think people would notice, worry, tell me they thought I had died or perhaps seen me acting unlike myself. Alas not once has that been true. They act as if I was there just the other day. As if a year or more was but twelve hours of absence. Always a smile and 'morning Rob.'

I always seem to wake in the woods, at least until now, wearing what I had blacked out in. Always spotless and fresh smelling as laundry just dried.

This time I sit in the dark, I can't see, almost believing I am now conscious in the void, but as my eyes adjust I see I'm in a deep hole, perhaps an old well of sorts.

My clothing is damp, dirty and smells of shit and some kind of cooper like smell. I'm saturated through. Even my skin and hair is wet.

My head throbs as I try harder to see around me. My hand flying to my forehead where not only am I met with more dampness, but a sticky substance. I smell the coopery smell as my fingers come close

to my face to try and make out what it is.

The colors are hard to seen in this place, but I know them too well and gagging from the sight of it, I know now that I am bleeding. I have a head injury, a first, and it shakes me to my core.

What attacked me and is it still here?

Not wishing to find out, I pushed myself up. My whole body is shaking as if it will give any moment. The lightest touch would have me tumbling at this point. Forcing myself to take a wobbling step after another, feeling along the wall, or at least the closest I can imagine to be one. I can hear and feel it crumbling a bit with each touch of my hand.

There has to be a way out. The farther I go the more it appears to get brighter. Hoping it was not a trick of my eyes as they adjust, I push on. A smile growing from my chapped lips as I finally saw actual light above. Laughing, I feel hope building, only to have it dashed upon a closer look.

There is no rope, no foot holdings, nothing to indicate a way of getting out this way. I'm on the edge of a breakdown. Lost alone and unable to find a way out of a hole with a possible mad person or thing down here with me. Licking my lips I take a deep breath. I have to think and push the panic that was building down until at least I get out of this hole.

The wall face appears solid, but I remind myself how it crumbled under my support just a few moments ago. Biting my lips nervously, I begin feeling at the wall. It feels solid enough, but at points it gives and crumbles just as rest of the walls had. With a prayer and a push, I press hard into the wall. With little give, it appears to allow a indent to form. But the true test would come next. With another press, using my foot this time, I see if I can make a study footing. I can't help but cringe as I feel the dirt pack around my toes, where has my shoes gone? At this point I don't think I'll ever find out. With a bit of lift with that foot, I test if the new foot hold will in fact hold my weight.

The dirt shifts with the new pressure. I can't help gasping, frozen in place. Will it continue to sink further down, making it's way to the

floor? A happy chuckle escapes my lips as the earth settles around my foot. It appears as if the dirt will hold and if it continued to do so, I'll be able to climb to freedom and away from this hell.

It is a painful and tiring process. The longer I go at it, the higher I get, but my muscles are screaming now. They want me to stop and just let go. My whole body shakes as I reach for the next spot to apply a holding. As I make another hand hole to pull myself up with, the earth gives way to my sudden weight. A curse slips from my lips as I feel myself begin to slid down the wall. Panicking, I frantically begin kicking and grasping at the earth in front of me.

I don't even know how, but I find my hands grasping at a lip of ground. With the last of my strength I pull myself over. Rolling to a stop on now solid ground, I am no longer able to it hold it back. Sobs and gasps for air come rushing forth from me. I'm alive. I haven't fallen to my death. I've made it.

How long has it been? I finally open my eyes, I didn't even know I had closed them, to look around me. There is little light here, but more then that dark hole. My breathing has begun to even out. My sobs begin to silence as I take in deep breath long breaths. The stench here is worse then below, but I don't care at this point. Finally feeling calm enough, I force himself to get up. I can no longer stay here. I need to find a way out and find help.

It's only now I begin to notice the things around me. There is a large tower of what appears to be items of all kinds. From toys, furniture, odds and ends, and who knows what else. I can't help but pause and look on in awe at this strange unnatural formation. It doesn't appear even physically possible to be standing. Snapping from my awe, shaking my head to clear it, I then spot the horrifying sight around me.

Bile rushes up into my mouth as I can't help but stare. There is not one, but what must be more then a dozen bodies surrounding the tower in front of me. I can't hold it back as I see now the different stages the bodies are in and to make it worse, they're all children. I violently project away from the body at my feet, heaving for a good time before finally having nothing left in me. Taking deep breaths, whipping any possible mess from my mouth. I try and avoid looking

again at them as I look for a way out from this chamber of nightmares.

I wish I could run from this hell hole, but my body is already exhausted to the point I can barely walk. Carefully stepping while trying hard not to look down, I make it to an exit. Entering a pipe, I have no idea where I am going, and yet my body guides me. Time passes to the sound of my bare feet sloshing through the sewage waters. I've never been in the sewers before, but I make an educated guess from the sights and smells of my surroundings.

The air somehow seems to begin to clear as I start to believe I am hearing chirping. When I turn the next corner, I can not stop the smile from forming on my lips as I get the urge to dash towards the now very visible sunlight. I sprint, more like stumbling walk towards the entrance. Fresh air and sunlight greet me as I fall into the creek outside. Taking in all the warmth I can get with the deviously clean smells of nature around me. I don't even care that the rest of my body has become wet again by this. Overjoyed by the freedom from that dark endless nightmare.

"Bobby Gray! What the hell are you doing here?"

My head shoots up as I look towards the sudden female voice. My eyes finding her quickly and easily as I spot Officer Linda Springs standing and staring at me as if I have grown a second head.

"Linda..." the words come out so quiet I wonder if I have even said them let alone don't believe she could hear them. She rushes to my side, not caring about the water as it soaks her uniform, wading to my side.

"Bobby, what ... what happened to you? Y... You're covered in sewage... and blood? Where did all this blood come from?" Her hands are a dark red, as I suddenly notice what she is talking about. As she helps me up, I can now see I was not only soaked in sewage and creek water, but also what appeared a good amount of blood. No longer fresh, but darkened with time and wetted by the creek water. Linda is no longer looking at her hands, nor at my clothing as she takes in my face. She pales as she carefully reaches to the spot on my head, causing me to wince.

"That looks really bad. With all this sewage... we need to get you to a hospital. We'll get you cleaned up and changed and this taken care of before it can get infected if it isn't already."

I can do nothing but nod and follow her as she allows me to use her for support. It's a trek up hill and through the woods before we get to her squad car. I feel exhaustion pulling at me as she helps me slide into the front with her.

We don't speak for a time as she starts the engine and heads towards the Derry Medical Hospital. But I can tell she has several questions that I know I can't answer no matter how much I wish I could.

"Bobby..." He turns to see a very concerned Linda staring ahead, her eyes focused on the road.

"What were you doing down there? I got a call of some kids reporting bodies in the sewers and I find you falling right out as I get there. You weren't part of this were you?"

My mouth bobs for a bit as I try to think how to respond. I want to say, No, nothing at all but in all honesty, I have no idea.

"I... Woke up in a hole, like this.... when I finally got out..." He tries not to focus on what I had seen, it already will haunt my dreams tonight. "Those kids were telling the truth. There.. there were a dozen or more bodies down there..."

Linda turns for the first time to look at me since we started this drive. She gives me a look of pity, "I'm so sorry you had to see that Bobby. I know how sensitive you are... did you get sick?" I nodded, prickling tears form as I feel my cheeks burn with embarrassment. Linda looks back to the road, but puts a hand on my shoulder and rubs it softly. At any other time I would have pulled away. I hate touch, it sets me on edge. It doesn't bother me if I initiate it myself, but when others just suddenly do it, I feel like squirming away. But this time, I stay still and actually take comfort from it.

"It's going to be alright. I needed to know so we don't use it as evidence to find the sick son of a bitch that did this." I agreeably nod again, though that doesn't stop my feelings of embarrassment. The fear building in me of being taunted for such a unmanly weak action. "Bobby, don't you start thinking like that." Linda is staring at me. She has parked at the hospital without me even noticing. "Anyone would have done that in the same situation. It was not a show of weakness."

I look at her confused, had she read my mind?

"I know you too well by now, little Bobby Gray, I know how that mind of your's works." She smiled warmly. "Now let's get you cleaned up and checked."



## 2. Chapter 2

Linda lead me in as we walked to the entrance. Unlike your big city hospitals, small town ones are rather small and news travels all the faster over what new incident had happened. As we made our way in, doctors, nurses, and orderlies alike stare at us. Well mostly me. Who wouldn't? I'm wearing torn and ragged shirt and pants. All of which is soaked in dirt, Senegal and blood. My face must be covered with all this as well cause it doesn't appear anyone really recognizes me like Linda did.

She stops at the front desk and informs them of me. The somewhat kind secretary asks us to take a seat and wait. I'm not surprised seeing I have but a head wound that appears to have stopped bleeding. Before I can go sit Linda attempts to haggle with the secretary. It appears to help that she points out how badly I need a shower and fresh clean clothes. With a bit of resistance that soon gives, the secretary tells us I can use their showers and barrow a pair of scrubs and hospital booties after I'm finished.

Linda gives a kind thank you and smile with a tip of her head before taking my arm and leading me gently towards where the secretary directed her. As we move down the halls I can't help but over hear things sound of a group of children talking if not almost shouting to be heard by the doctors. It appears they are trying to visit someone, a few ones perhaps, but they look almost if not worse then myself in some cases.

I pause staring and wonder if these are the group of kids Linda spoke of reporting about the sewers. I don't get long to ponder on this before Linda a bit roughly tugs me along.

"Come on, you need a good cleaning before you can start getting into mischief."

"I wasn't going to... those are the kids you mentioned, aren't they?"

She almost seemed reluctant to tell me before she shifted and give a small nod.

"Yeah. The other officers thought they were just seeking attention until I found you. Thought a bunch of kids just went playing in the sewers and got hurt. Tried to cover it up by telling some lies. Well they'll be shitting a brick when they find out these kids were telling the truth."

Linda found the showers and had me stripe. Thankfully allowing me privacy behind the low wall of the men's showers.

"Normally we take pictures first for evidence, but I think we can get by with bagging these." She placed my ruined clothing into some bags.

"I'm goin to call in. You scrub as best as you can and repeat." She ordered before leaving me alone.

The water took a bit of adjusting, but once right I stepped under. All kinds of muck and debris ran down my legs to swirl away down the drain. I took my time, soaking in the warmth and loosening to dried caked mix from my being. Once the loose material was done falling off me like a sludge gore feast, I happily added soap. Wincing as cuts I knew and others I had no idea I had filled with the cleansing liquid. A hiss left me as I began to wash my hair. Turning from mud blood caked mess to messy brown as the shampoo did its job.

Around the third or fourth round of scrubbing, I could no longer smell sewage and found the water clear as can be. Feeling a million times better, I turned the water off and made my way to a towel. Wrapped up, I went to find Linda. She stood outside the shower room holding clothes and booties. I must have been in there longer than I thought for her to be done reporting in already.

She must of heard me cause she turned to face me with a warm smile.

"Looking much better there Bobby. Feel like it too?"

I nodded quickly with a small grin.

"Good. Here are some temporary clothes until we can get you back to your place. The doctor is able to see you after you finish getting

dressed. "

I thanked her as I took the fresh clean set. Heading back inside to the locker portion of the shower room to dress. I could tell right away my long body wasn't going to fit well in these short scrubs. My legs making the pants appear more like shorts on me. They left part of my shins and ankles exposed while the shirt appeared to be a bit too large. It was like I was wearing a circus tent as it slipped over my head. It was made for a larger set person than myself, most evident by the way it hung low past my hips. I was most thankful though that the booties fit my large feet. With a sigh and some tucking, I finally made my way out to meet Linda.

She lead me to a room, telling me to sit on the exam table as she stood near by in a most officer ready fashion. It felt like ages before the doctor entered with a smile. It always felt awkward to see someone smile at me when the only reason they are doing it is to try and win my trust. I frown, but don't say anything as he speaks to Linda. I'm not really focused on their words, only hearing them as if at a distance.

I tend to zone out when others speak, or I don't find I am needed at that time. It takes me a moment to register that the doctor is now speaking to me.

"Robert? There we are. Spaced off there didn't we?" The unnerving smile again.

"Let's see if you have anything more then those cuts." He shone a light in to my eyes as I focused on and did as I was asked. He seemed fairly worried for a moment as he told me to follow the light.

"His eye just does that." Linda spoke up from behind him.

"Aww, a lazy eye then." he nodded, "I was a bit worried there. Good to know it's pre existing. It appears, Robert, that you are a okay. Only the scraps, bruises and that nasty head cut. No sign of concussion or any other issues that I can see. I suggest though that you have someone keep on eye on you just in cause for a time and report back here if something appears off."

"I'll keep an eye on him." Linda spoke up. She was always keeping an eye on me it seemed, even when I didn't feel I needed the help.

She was always too kind to me. Popping in to visit, most times

bringing me something to eat when I spaced out in whatever it was I had my mind set on. I'd probably starved a few times if she wasn't there.

"Is that alright with you Robert?" I nodded my agreement to her suggestion. "Alright then, I'll get these larger cuts taken care of and that head wound stitched. I'll prescribe a antibiotic in cause you might get an infect. From what Linda here tells me, you where found in the sewers. Can't let any of those nasties get the best of you." He scribbled out on his script pad and handed it to me before giving another smile and leaving us alone.

I never really liked having to deal with this sort of stuff, being handed something and people assuming I know what to do with it. I don't even think I have ever had to use a prescription before in my life. I can't help but look at it perplexed before Linda takes it gently from my hands.

"I'll see that this gets filled out before we leave."

A nurse comes in shortly and cleans my forehead, causing me to wince and let out a hissing noise as the alcohol goes to work killing anything nasty left there. I'm not looking forward to the next part as she uses a needle to numb the area. It pinches and I rest the urge to swat at her. Linda is kind enough to take my hand and squeeze it gently without a word. Instead of pulling away, I actually find some comfort in this as the nurse then begins to stitch the wound closed.

As soon as the nurse is done though, I pull my hand from Linda's carefully. She isn't offended, and just smiles at me as I get a large gazes tapped to cover the stitching. Finished the nurse makes her way out. I don't mind she hasn't tried to make any small talk. I never really know what to say to someone when they try to. I merely nod mostly in silence and most likely a look of misery on my face. That usually gets the to stop and then wander off with a goodbye.

As soon as the nurse is gone, Linda takes my hands and places some change in them. "Why don't you go see if you can find something in the vending machine to your liking. It may take a while for me to get this filled out." She waves the script from earlier in her hand. "I don't want you passing out from lack of food. Once this is filled I'll take you out for something good, what do you say about that Bobby?"

I can't help giving her a genuine smile, "I'd like that. Thanks Linda. I... I'm sorry to be putting you through all this mess with me." I feel a pinch of guilt as I admit this to her.

"Nonsense. It's part of the job and even if wasn't, I wouldn't be a very good friend if I didn't help you out, now would I?"

Friend...I sometimes forget I even have such a thing in this world. It seems like years since we first met. Come to think about it, when did we first met?

I want to say it was childhood. I remember the first time I met her, a young girl with a bright smile, missing some teeth. But that didn't make her smile any less pretty. Her hair like the sunshine that shown so brightly upon it. She kept it pulled back in the ever popular pink tails. She was never rude, nor put off by me quiet nature. She just smiled and introduce herself. Offering a hand in friendship, she began to babble about all the things she enjoyed.

Some how in the end she promised to look after me and I believed every word.

She's kept her word ever since.

I wander out into the halls as I watch her go in a different direction. Looking for any signs that may help me in my adventure, I make my way down the hall. Trying hard to not get too curious about the doors either closed or more so the ones open as I pass them.

When I turn at the end of the hall I spot the machine I've been looking for, only to find the kids I saw earlier are in a group in front of it.

I can't catch a break today. Nervously, I begin my way that way, letting my nearly dry hair cover my face as as keep my head low. As I get closer I can hear the children talking.

"Stupid adults, they never listen." A boy with thick glasses practically shouted.

"Richie, st..stop that. Y.. you k.. know IT ma...makes ss...sure they don't." This boy seemed oddly familiar.

"Bill's right. The only things they believed were my dad and the bodies." A tall red haired girl spoke softer then the other two had.

"Did you hear they found Henry's dad... His neck was cut. Bleed out all over. Do you know how many diseases those people could catch from him?" A boy with a cast fidgeted as he spoke.

"They found the rest of Bowser's gang as well. Throats slashed as well. He left them in his car!" The boy I now knew to be called Richie chirped. "You know they're going to blame all this on Henry. That's if they ever find him. How deep do you think that well was?" He looked to the rest as the looked unsure.

The group fell silent as I came closer, looking at me unsure and moving out of the way as I made past to the vending machine. I could feel their eyes burning into my back as I made my selection. A bag of M&M's fell, crouching to reach in to get them I could hear them whispering.

"Who's that?"

"Ben, quiet." The girl of the group mumbled.

As I turn I try not to look at them as I move to go back past them. What I didn't expect was the one named Bill to step out in front of me. I freeze in my confusion.

"You came in earlier...you looked like you came from the sewers. You saw them didn't you?"

I slowly look up at him, he's staring determined to hear my answer. I know what he means without him explaining.

Swallowing, I nod slowly. "Y... yes."

He nodded, looking relieved but sad. "You're the reason they believed us...Thank you."

I feel shocked to hear that. Why would he thank me for telling the truth? Were the officers so unbelieving of children? I couldn't believe they would ignore this group from how they looked. They look like they had just been in battle and gone through hell itself to get here.

"It... it wa...was... n..n.. nothing." Why am I stuttering suddenly?

"How did you get there? There was no when alive down there but us." Bill looks like he's trying to but a puzzle together as he looks me over. I opened my mouth to reply when I feel a hand on my shoulder. I jump, whirling around to find Linda there.

"I see you kids ran into Bobby here." They nodded looking at me and then her. "I hope you've been nice to him. He's a kind soul. Just a big kid himself at times." She smiled brightly.

I feel a blush on my cheeks as I grow embarrassed from her praises.

"I'll be getting more of his story. Hopefully with his and your own

we'll figure this all out and get this cased wrapped up." She looked to the boy named Bill with a sad look.

"I'm sorry for your lose. I hope this now brings your family closer." He simple nods, but there is something more behind it. He looks like he wants to say something but keeps it to himself.

I look to her confused was she leads me away, saying her goodbyes and well wishes to the group. It would appear one of their friends had been injured in the sewers. They weren't allowed in to see him at this time. Explaining why I had seen them all shouting earlier and now waiting the halls.

We make it to the cruiser before she turns to me from the drivers seat.

"Bill Denbrough." I look to her confused. "That boy, he lost his brother last year. Georgie Denbrough. His family hasn't been the same. Poor kid kept trying to find him. Saying he knew where his brother would be if we just looked there. The whole family is a wreck from losing him. Now... it turns out it was a serial killer." She sighed shaking her head, "None of those kids deserved any of this."

I just sit there listening quietly. The name sounds so familiar to me. Then it hits my why. I met Georgie last year, before I blacked out. He was out playing on his own when I ran into him, well he ran into me. I'd been making my way to work at the tv studio when a felt a small body collied into mine. I looked down to find a small boy with brown hair and look of worry planted on his face.

"I'm sorry mister. I wasn't looking where I was going." I offered my hand to help him up. The poor kid looked surprised by it before taking it. I haled him up to his feet with a warm smile.

"It's okay. No harm down. You just try and be more careful."

He grinned right back, "I will." He offered his hand to me, "I'm Georgie, Georgie Denbrough." I couldn't help but chuckle and take it with a nice shake, "Nice to meet you Georgie. I'm Bobby, Bobby Gray. You really shouldn't talk to strangers though Georgie. It can be dangerous."

I looked about worried, hoping to spot his mother or father.

"Where are your parents?"

"Oh, I'm with my brother. I was just trying to catch up." He pointed

behind me to a taller boy who stood not too far away, watching us both carefully.

"Well you better go and catch up then." A chuckle escaped me as I stepped aside to let him by. The boy grinned and danced off with a wave, "See you later Bobby!"

I paled now knowing that small bubbly boy was long dead. My stomach churned uneasily as I looked out the window, tears prickling my eyes as they formed. My advice hadn't helped and in the end the poor kid suffered a horrible death.

Linda's hand was on my shoulder again. It seemed that today I would have to withstand more contact than I ever could remember before this day.

"I'm sorry Bobby...I know how you can be empathetic. I shouldn't have said anything."

I take a deep breath, sniffing as I whipping the tears the got free from my face, "No... no, it's alright. Just... I.. I met him once. He was a good kid..." I fall silent again as I continue to watch out the window. Feeling a squeeze of my shoulder before Linda took her hand away, I could tell she understood. The engine started, sounding distant as I dwell on what I see outside, she begins to back out of the parking spot and head out.

"We'll get you something good. No more talks about this until after. It's going to be alright Bobby. It's all over now."



### 3. Chapter 3

When it comes to M&Ms, there are different views on how one should eat them. Perhaps the most common being grabbing a handful and just chowing the down. I've always tended to eat them a different way.

I pulled the pack of M&Ms from my chest pocket. Carefully pouring them out in the placemat in front of me as Linda looks over the cafe menu.

"Are you getting your usual?"

Without even looking up from my task I nod. "Rarer the better."

"I don't know how you can stand eating that much rare meat. You've got to be the only person in this twin to have three extra rare patties on a burger."

I just grin, my eyes glued to my task as so goes back to deciding on her own order. When it comes to my way of eating M&Ms, I divide them up in groups by color. Then start with the smallest group and work my way up. If they are even at any point, I pick my least favorite color of the group and so on. I occasionally take one and bite right in, but the rest of the time I pop it in and suck the candy coating off and let the chocolate melt away on my tongue.

I pay little attention as our waitress arrives to collect our orders. Linda gets hers out of the way before stating mine. As she writes it down I speak up to correct it a bit.

"I want two chocolate shakes and extra fries, please." My eyes haven't even left the last of the colored M&Ms in front of me. With a nod, she moves on to get our orders in.

Only the red M&Ms now lay before me. I find this rather odd. It's usually the browns that are last left. As I scrutinize them as if they have said something most offensive, Linda speaks up softly.

"Before I forget, you need to take one of these." She shakes a bottle of

medicine in front of me. I give her a look of disgust as she pours two out, handing them to me before nudging my water towards me.

"Don't make this harder then it really is Bobby. Just take them and get it over with."

I glare at her pathetically, but she gives me a stern look in return. Defeated I place them in my mouth and drink the water. It doesn't go to well. I choke as it feels very unnatural as the pills make it to the back of my throat. Gasping, I inhale the water and it goes down the wrong way. As I grab at my throat sputtering, Linda jumps up and slaps me in the back until I find I can breath again. Gasping on gulps of air. My throat is raw and I just glare at Linda again.

"How the hell do you screw up taking pills bobby?" She's not actually angry, I can tell from the look of worry and relief on her face. Taking a careful sip of my water I respond with a croak. "I've never had to take pills before." Some how this shocks her as her mouth hangs open. "What?" She sighs heavily as she rubs her forehead. "You should have told me. I could have tried to get a liquid form or something. I'll have to crush these up for you in something or you'll never take them at all." I snicker at that cause it is so true. The ones I had just taken feel unsettling on my stomach as it is.

By the time I finish the large group of red M&Ms, my tongue is coated a bright red as the last one melts away. I'm glad to see our food arrive by the time this happens. The candy has done nothing to help with the hunger gnawing in my gut. The delicious smell of my burger hits me and I feel drool collect in my mouth. I feel like I'm holding a glass of water in my mouth by the time the waitress places my order in front of me.

"Wow Bobby, I don't thing I've seen you look so hungry." She hands me a napkin as I now notice the drool has been escaping. I swallow what I can before using the napkin to whip what's left on my face. My cheeks burn red in embarrassment. I'm glad I had ordered so much food. I barely spare a moment before picking up and taking a large bigot out of my burger. I happen to look up to see Linda staring wide eyed.

"I could have sworn I just saw your jaw unhinge like a snake or

something just then. How do you do that? I can't even get two patties in my own mouth." She chuckles, smiling fondly at me.

"It takes talent." I snort when I can talk again. "That and no idea how long since you last ate a good meal." She looks a bit saddened by this realization. A small nod as she looks at her own food. "You don't remember how you got there...and the darnest thing is I want to say I saw you yesterday...but the looks of you when you came falling out of that pipe...it was as if you'd been held prisoner for days, maybe month." She picks at her food as she tells me all this.

I place my own food aside a moment as I focus on what she's just said.

"I'd say I've felt like it's been longer...You know no one has ever took me seriously in the past when I said I blacked out for long periods of time." She nodded, now looking up at me.

"This was another one of those times. But I've given up trying to tell people that."

"I believe you." My eyes widen with surprise as Linda looks at me seriously,

"I wasn't here until after the last time it happened. We'd just moved into town then. I remember you telling me how frightening it was..."

I remembered that days as well. I had confessed how frightened I was of it happening again at any moment. She'd hugged me tight and said she'd make sure I'd have nothing to fear again. I wonder often that's the only reason she became a cop. To keep a childhood promise alive.

"I failed you Bobby." I didn't expect to hear that. Staring confused I can see tears threatening to flow over as Linda stares at me.

"I promised to keep you safe and I'd make sure to help you find out what happened when you did black out again. Instead of keeping my promise, I found you injured and starving, who the hell knows what else. I failed my best friend and I don't even know how I could have done that." She looked away as she clenched her fists, a sob ripping through her.

How could I not have noticed how hard all of this was on her? How didn't I see this the moment she found me? He do something I rarely would ever thing of doing. I reach out and take her hands in mind, squeezing them softly.

"Linda, I forgive you."

She looks at me unsure with blood shot eyes, "you...do?"

I nod, squeezing her hands again. "You are the only one ever to believe me and ever to truly notice something was wrong. Whatever is happening, we'll figure it out together. Who better the you to help me solve this puzzle?"

She chuckled, giving a warm smile, nodding as she composes herself again. "You're right." She rubbed the tears away quickly, "you'd never figure this out without me." We both chuckle at that before getting back to our meals.

I finish everything and still feel I could eat more. At least the sharp pain of hunger seems to have dulled. Linda even let me finish the last of her own meal. Promising to get me more soon, not wanting me to get sick eating to quickly. But honestly I feel I'll be ill if I don't eat more soon.

She pays the bill, though I start to get ready to protest before remembering all forms of payment I would have are not on me.

In the vehicle, I begin to buckle up as she starts the engine, "I'll go get you some groceries and we'll head back to your place after. You should stay in the car while I do that. Get some rest if you can." With a nod, I sigh agreeing with her. I feel exhausted now that I've eaten and the adrenaline has left my veins.

I jump suddenly from the sudden sound of a car door slamming. Staring about confused, Linda is staring at me with an impish grin, "You really were out cold weren't you?" She chuckles before I turn to see the groceries in the back of the patrol car. When had we gotten to the store? Now I notice the large sign staring at me from the above the windshield.

"W..when did we get here?"

"I'd guess about an hour ago. I figured I could take a bit longer seeing you didn't wake when I told you I was heading in. You looked too cute to wake up just for that." She's making a face in a mocking cute manner. I'm a big too grumpy for this, and sneer, shoving her. This only spurs her on to laugh all the harder.

"Alright, alright, I'll stop. But you are cute when you sleep Bobby. I ain't lying."

I manage to stay awake the rest of the drive. It doesn't take long for us to reach my house. It's in a normal enough neighborhood. A house on either side and another behind it like all the others on this street. The only way you can really tell it's mine is that it doesn't have all that fancy yard work the others around me insist on having done. I barely keep the lawn cut as it is. The only thing that really grows without me needing to interfere are the sunflowers. I don't remember ever planting them. They just are there. Always. Never a year does it go by without them coming back after winter.

The tree out front is oddly looking ill. It's usually lush and full of leaves and wonderful shade this time of year. Instead I can see through the leaves that are there and it feels like there are shadows that shouldn't be there. I'm suddenly not a fan of that tree. Doesn't help that my house suddenly feels all the more dark and eerie. It has a dark blue exterior with matching roof. The widow shutters are more green while the windows themselves are a white matching the accents of the house. The porch and rails are the same color. An older home in appearance and design from the others on the street.

My brow frowns as I stare longer. It appears the paint has worn a bit and chipped away. Some growth is making its way up the siding that I don't remember being there before. To add to it all, my lawn appears to have gotten out of hand. The grass looks around shin high compared to when I last cut it. Even the fencing around my property looks to have worn and rusted in my absence.

I'm not the only one to notice as Linda parks and looks out my passenger window. "What the hell happened to this place?" She looks just as shocked as I feel.

We get out and both take bags as we head through the gate.

"Okay, if this isn't evidence enough, I don't know what is. It really does look like you've been missing for a year. Maybe even more. You

had a fresh coat on this place last I visited. This just doesn't happen over night."

"It's never looked liked this before... not one of the other times I lost time. It's always looked like I never left. Fresh, clean, but this, this is wear that can't just take place over one day of missing."

I grab the spare key under the welcome mat, the door creaks loudly as it opens. I'll need to make sure to oil that. In fact, I might need to do that with all the doors by the looks of the inside. The entire place is covered in a layer of dust. Cobwebs appear about as I spot spiders scurry and others eat what they've caught. A shiver goes down my spin as I head to the kitchen and place the bags on the counter. Linda does the same, obviously in as much shock of the inside as the out. "Bobby... this is really freaking me out now. I believed you before, but now it's really sinking in."

"Welcome to my world." I snort, though I feel overwhelmed with a new fear, but relief as well. I'm not crazy, someone else sees this, but what does that mean about all the other people that said I was imagining it. Acting as if this was nothing but a dream to me.

"Linda... you're the first person to believe me and see all this with me. I've told the authorities and others about this time and time again and they never believed me. Just shrugged this off as a dream or something else. Lin... what if there is something more going on here... you don't think the town is in on something do you?"

She looks at me worried. I'm wouldn't be surprised if she has already been thinking this herself. "You weren't born here Lin... maybe... maybe that's why you aren't affected the same as the rest of the town. What if it's some kind of conspiracy and we're the only ones that know the truth. Those kids, they were talking like it was. They know. They have to know something more then we both do." I can feel my panic rising. My chest feels tight as I suddenly find it harder to breath. The world begins to feel like it is going into the distance as my body shakes and a strange crying noise escapes me. I can feel my cheeks suddenly wetting, I can't take this. I just can't!

Warm arms embrace me, rubbing my back gently, speaking softly to me. Linda guides me to a chair and keeps doing the same as she sits beside me.

"Bobby, I need you to try and breath slowly. Count to ten." She holds

me and helps me count. She's not even talking about what just caused me panic anymore. Something about how she's thinking of decorating her place. I can't help snorting and chuckling at that. I didn't notice how calm I am until she pulls away with a smile. "That's better. I'll get these things put away for you. Why don't you try and clean up a bit. Are you still hungry?" I nod vigorously. "Alright, I'll get to working on something for you after I finish."

She stands, ruffling my hair in the way she knows I despise. I swipe at her, playfully in a groan, but she's already putting things away. With a long sigh and a deep breath I get up to start work on at least dusting first. I'm not sure how to go about it really. It's so thick, even the furniture isn't the right color anymore. I groan knowing what I have to do. Making my way to the hall closet I retrieve the vacuum and lug it out to the living room. It's going to take time to get everything clean again. Shaking my head, I focus on one thing at a time before I can start into another melt down.

I had at least the living room down by the time Linda called me back to the kitchen. She'd been able to clean it up the kitchen nicely. I was impressed as I took a seat at the table where a large sandwich and chips sat waiting for me.

"Sorry it took a bit. Wasn't sure what you wanted for a drink. Any preference?" She stood by the fridge with a large cup.

"I think a water will be fine, thanks Lin. I wouldn't have been able to do this without you."

"It's nothing Bobby. What are friends for." She dumped some ice cubes in the glass before filling it to almost the top with water. She took a seat as she placed the glass in front of me.

"I need to go for a bit. Fill out some paperwork and snoop around a little. See if I can find anything odd or points out your theory. So, I want you to rest as much as you can. I'll be coming back after I'm off work." I was about to say she didn't need too when she lifted her hand, shaking her head, "None of that. I said I was going to keep an eye on you for signs of head injury and I'm going to do that. Even if that means I have to sleep over on your couch for the night." She grinned, "Don't take too much time cleaning while I'm away. You've had a hard day. I'm surprised you have so much energy after just an hour of sleep." She pushed out of her seat, placing the chair back, "If

you need anything before I get back, the number for the station is where it's always been. Just call and if I'm not there, they'll radio me and I'll be here as quick as I can." With a fond kiss to the top of my head, she made her way out. I shouted goodbye before hearing the door click behind me. Taking the now silent room in before I ate.



## 4. Chapter 4

It doesn't take me long to finish the sandwich as I sit staring at the kitchen wall. It's suddenly too quiet for my liking. In the past I would have enjoyed the peace from time to time, but now...A shiver goes up my spin as I push back out of my chair. It takes me just crossing the room to do what I have set out to accomplish. With a twist of a knob, the old radio kicks on. Starting out faint before growing louder as it warms up. The inside appears to glow as the music builds. I wonder how long I've had this. It appears to be vintage, perhaps before the sixties. Maybe even later as I look at the shape and details of it. No matter as it some how continues to work. The lush sound of the music playing on the station fills the air and grows as I turn the volume higher.

Satisfied with the silence gone, I make short work of the chips Linda paired with my sandwich. With the chips gone, I place the dish in the sink for later cleaning. Downing the glass of water in one gulp, I add it to the sink. Taking a moment to actually think the day over, I let the music calm me as the images from earlier bombarded me. Frustrated and wanting to forget for even just a bit longer, I turn the Radio off to make my way to clean my bedroom. The thought of sleeping an inch or so of dust sends me into shivers.

I grab the vacuum before making the trek up the stairs to my bedroom. Grunting as I carry the heavy thing and wondering why they can't just make these things lighter. It's bad enough the cord always finds a way to be too short when I reach the end of a task. The last of the dirt dirt just mocking my efforts. Grumbling I heft it onto the top step, finally pausing to catch my breath. The hallway looks eerie in the lighting. A single unburnt bulb is left to illuminate the way. It doesn't help much either that when I catch a glimpse outside through one of the many windows that a storm appears to be blowing in.

The sky is slowly darkening as I can't help but stare. So sudden it goes from sunny to a green hue before the sound of rain begins to beat against the panes of glass. Pulling myself from the sudden change in view, I push the vacuum down the hall, ignoring the

needed cleaning of the there to make it to my room.

The door swings open easily, but makes a sound of protest all the same. Screeching like a wounded animal asking for help. Be it to save it or end its misery. A cloud of dust kicks up from the motion of the door and I'm sent into a fit of coughing to clear my lungs. With eyes burning, tearing from the onslaught, I make my way in and search for the nearest outlet plug. Once set and ready, it doesn't take me long to make quick progress. The sound of the vacuum blaring in my ears is not so soothing as the music from before, but it does the job keeping me focused and calm as I work.

The sky has darkened all the as I work. It's pitch black by the time I finish. The room is now dusted and vacuumed clean, with a fresh set of sheets upon the bed. I'm rather pleased with how much I got done. A sudden crash of thunder has me leaping nearly out of my skin. The weather appears to have turned for the worse during my work. The lights flicker as if to state this fact to me. As I wonder if I have a working flashlight on hand, the storm sees it fit to take what light I had.

The room plummets into darkness, taking the rest of the house with it. A quiet curse escapes my lips as I make for the hallway. Giving up the idea of finding a flashlight that could actually be working, I make my way carefully down the hall. My goal is to make it to the basement and see if it's just the circuit breaker, which will be easy to mend, or an outage. Which I pray is not the case for my own mental state.

I know the house well, barely feeling my way along. As I make my way into the kitchen, it's really the only time I need to feel around as to find the handle to the basement. From there I just have to follow the wall and find the large metal box. With luck, just a flick of a switch and the power would be back on.

I find my way in and beginning to feel my way to the box when I hear the shuffle of feet. I freeze as soon as I hear it. Turning slowly I try and strain a look to see if I can find the source of the noise. It's not like my home is new or anything, far from it. I don't even remember when it could have been built. With such an old structure there are many things that can find their way in. Rodents of all sorts

would be happy to find a home in this dark dank basement and right now I can't believe I'm praying I just heard one of them.

My mind races as I now rush to find the latch to open the box and start flipping switches. As I get the latch free and feel the front open, I hear the shuffling noise again. It's much closer as I desperately begin to flick the switches back and forth. Not one is restoring power as I do so. I can feel my panic building as I hear the shuffling stop as if someone is standing behind me. I could swear I feel the breath on my neck as I hear it leave invisible lips. I'm shaking as I frantically keep trying the switches, not daring to turn.

The last switch works and I whirl around to face who ever is behind me. Only I'm confused to find no one there. I look at the ground around me and all I see are my own foot prints in the dirt there isn't even a single sign of a rodent that I could blame. There isn't even foot prints other then my own. After checking once more, I turn back to close the box and latch it. Feeling as though I'm still being watched, I turn to find still no one there. I'm alone and yet that doesn't give me anymore comfort.

With my mind set on heading back up stairs, I turn in time to see a flash of yellow run past the doorway. Confused I run after, trying to see if it was my imagination or something else. I'm in the kitchen again, but I don't see anything out of the norm.

As I make my way into the living room the light decides it's the best time to flicker again, startling me into a squealing. Glaring at it with frustration, praying the power doesn't decide to go out again. Once has been enough.

The front door burst open as the lighting flashes and a loud bang of thunder follows seconds later. I feel like I've nearly had a heart attack as I take it all in. Linda stands, umbrella in hand cringing.

"Sorry. The wind got ahold of it." I sigh deeply, taking the time to regain my sanity. She shuts the door and locks it before placing her umbrella aside.

"How have you been holding up with me gone."

I can't help the chuckle that leaves me before I go into details, though

I leave out the stranger things for fear she thinks I was letting my imagination get the better of me.

"I'll see if I can find some working flashlights then." She moves to place several large folders on my table, in total i guess there is at least three. I hadn't even noticed she had them until now. Linda must have seen my curious look cause she is grinning at me in a devilish manner.

"This my dear Bobby, is all the information found on strange things that have been reported to the department. From missing persons, unsolved murders, and the out right bizarre. I haven't looked at them at all myself yet. I wanted to wait and look at them together."

I stare curiously at the large stack as she continues.

"I didn't have to dig for them either. They were all in a file cabinet that looked forgotten by the amount of dust I found. If it wasn't for recent finger smudges in that dust, I would have thought it was just an unused or broken filing cabinet."

As I reach to open the top folder for a peek, Linda grabs my wrist suddenly.

"I don't think so mister. You Bobby Gray are going straight to bed now that I'm back."

I give her a pout, but it's affect doesn't land.

"Nope. No puppy dog eyes either. You have to go in with me in the morning to give your statement of what happened to you and what you saw. Same as that group of kids. I still can't imagine how you both were in the same place, at the same time, but never ran into each other."

She gently releases me only to then turn me to the stairs. With a soft push, I begin my trek up the stairs with Linda calling behind me.

"If you need me, I'll be right here on the coach."

"Bobby..."

Boooooobbbby...

Bobby!"

I wake suddenly hearing Linda calling me. As I get up I rub the sleep from my eyes and make my way out to the hall, only now noticing it's still dark out.

"Linda?" I call with a frown, making my way for the stairs. "What is it? Why are you calling me? Is something wrong?"

I feel a chill climb my spine like thousands of tiny insects as I hear a child's giggle in reply.

"Who's there?" It's quiet only a moment before I can hear what sounds like a small girl singing.

"The itty bitty spider went up the water spout..."

I can't help but follow to where I hear the singing. Step after step I descend towards the first floor. My hand sliding over the railing as it guides me. My anchor.

"Down came the Losers and washed the spider out..."

I see the lights on in the kitchen as I round the corner. A shadow of movement draws me all the closer still.

"Bobby come play with me."

I freeze hearing Linda's voice, followed by a scream cut short by a sickening crunch.

"LIN!"

As fast as I can I rush to the kitchen where I'm unsure what I am seeing.

Blood pools on the floor, spreading slowly in all directions. A small figure, that appears to be a child, lies against the floor cabinets. A large figure shadows over them, obscuring my view as it holds something close to its chest.

"A year to late. Oh what fun we would of had." A playful voice croaks in a sing song manner.

As the figure turns to face me, I can now tell the body is that of a little girl wearing a pink dress with rabbits and flowers all over. The blood escaping where her head is torn clean off.

I can feel the figures eyes on me and look back to find bright glowing yellow eyes. Rings of red with in them, staring back at me. As I take it all in I can now make out the clothing, a renaissance looking attire of that an entertainer of the time. Out of place here. His make up place as snow lined with a sharp red smile that doesn't stop at his cheeks. It's raise far above his brows, a red nose to match. A clown? I feel anything but jolly seeing him staring me down. I begin to realize his mouth is stained red. It's splattered all about him. His goofy buck tooth smile covered in it and now I have a bad feeling may well be blood.

"We could still have fun, couldn't we Bobby?" It asks me with a pout that quickly turns back into a grin.

I stare horrified as the clown lifts the object away from his chest and into my view. I feel a scream rip through me with a wave of sickness and helplessness.

Linda's face grins back at me, grasped firming in the clowns hands. Her pink tails of her youth stick out on either side of her head as she watches me.

"Come on Bobby, it's not that bad is it?" She seems to servy herself, looking down where I can see what's left of her neck vertebrae and nerves. Veins still working as they try to send blood back to the heart that no longer can receive it.

"Oops, I guess we got a bit 'ahead' of ourselves, didn't we?" She smiles all the brighter as she tries to look back at the clown holding her severed head.

The laughter coming from her is nothing I've ever heard before. The soft laughter and light snorts I know so well of her are replaced with manic psychotic laughter only to be joined with that of another more

eerier playful one.

"Oh not me dear Lin Da. Old Pennywise is always just where he needs to be. But dear old Bobby here is trying to mess that up." The last of his words rang like a predators growl.

"Bobby needs to stop snooping around where he doesn't belong. Cause Bobby won't like what he'll find. Will he Lin Da?"

"No he won't." She giggles, her face appears to be decaying in front of me. The flesh is a sickly pale color and her eyes dull and losing all life from them.

"You wouldn't want dear Linda to float, now would ya Bobby?" Pennywise, as he calls himself, gives me a malicious grin I won't forget. With a quick motion, he tosses Linda's severed decaying head at me.

Following my first instinct, I try catch her. Reaching out only to watch as she falls short of my grasp.

I know I'm awake when I find myself on my bedroom floor, clutching my pillow that now sports a red stain. My head throbs with every beat of my heart. I let out a shaky breath before looking at my pillow confused. From the throbbing in my skull, I imagine I've aggravated the wound on my forehead. I test the theory reaching to touch the gauze there with my fingers, only to pull them back with a sharp hiss. Fresh blood coats my fingers as I stare down at them.

Just a horrible nightmare. That's all it was. It wasn't real and all it was is a side effect of the injury and my psyche trying to deal with the trauma. That's all, right...right?

"Bobby! Get up! This is the last time I'm going to be civil! Get your ass down here before I decide to eat your breakfast!" Linda shouts sound angry but I know too well she's not. Putting on a face is what she does. It's her way to practice her stern cop voice. Her bubbly friendly nature is a constant and everyone that knows her knows she's never had to draw her gun. She's talked every suspect out of any stupid situation they've gotten themselves into. They even start apologizing to her and those around them. With a talent like that I

really don't know why she bothers to practice being angry at all.

"I'm coming!" With a sigh, I get up, bringing my pillow along for the ride. As I make it the kitchen I groan, "do you know how to get blood out of this?" I present the pillow to Linda who finishes serving eggs from the pan in her hand. Setting the pan and spatula aside she takes a better look at my pillow.

"I think I know a remedy. I'll make sure first though." She strips the case off to look at the pillow itself below, "this will be a bit trickier with the feathers. If it isn't done right the feathers will stink after or not dry properly." She hums looking it over a bit more before placing it and the case aside for later.

"Now eat up and then get dressed. We have to get to the department early to get you checked in and anything else they need from either of us." She takes that moment to get a good look at me.

"Are you feeling alright? You're looking pretty pale."

Linda reaches out and places the back of her hand to my forehead gently. Moving it a bit about and frowning.

"I don't feel a fever. If anything you feel a bit clammy."

"Just a nightmare. That's all." I smile warmly, thankful for her concern were no one else seems to ever spare me a glance.

"Alright, but if you start feeling sick let me know. I'll change that bandage before we leave and before I forget." She grins going to the freezer, pulling out a pint of Neapolitan Ice cream. I see her place that on the counter before grabbing my antibiotics and pulling out a pill. She manages to crush it up into a fairly fine powder before getting a spoon of the ice cream. With a bit of skill she mixes them and presents the spoon to me with a grin.

"Alright, here you go." She continues to grin as she hands me the spoon. I can't help but grin myself at how clever she is to make it not only easier for me to take but also enjoyable.

"Thanks Lin." I savor the ice cream, barely caring about the crushed pill within. She looks at me closely, most likely making sure I've



taken it and not hiding it. To ease her mind I stick my tongue out, showing the top and bottom. A pleased noise comes from her as a large grin shows her approval.

"Good boy. Now eat and get dressed before we're late."

I now notice she's already dressed in her uniform and now downing her own food quickly.

I make short work of my own food before running up stairs to do as I've been told.

The nightmare of earlier soon being forgotten.

## 5. Chapter 5

"So, Mister Robert Gray..."

"He prefers Bobby." Linda spoke up where she was leaning against the interrogation window.

The male detective sighed before correcting himself.

"Bobby Gray. It says here in your statement that you do not know how you came to be in the sewers. You say here that you woke up in a hole where you then proceeded to climb out of. Upon doing so you found the bodies of the missing children. Where you preceded to vomit. Is this correct."

I nodded, fidgeting in my seat. My hands on the table, twitching as I found it hard to make eye contact with this man. His attitude was making me unnerved and reminded me at all the other times I had reported and was turned away. The only difference this time was that I had Linda on my side, standing near by giving me support the whole way through.

Clearing my throat I nodded, "Yes, that is correct."

"And you also say that the bodies that you could see that they appeared to have been eaten?" His brow rose as this, staring at me as if I was mad.

Again I nodded, "yes... that's correct. They appeared to have been. I... I'm no expert. It just looked like some creature had went at them... or some crazed mad person." Remembering how pieces were missing from different parts of the children brought bile up. The worst was the child I'd seen with no face at all. I feel a hand placed gently on my shoulder, turning to see that it is Linda, smiling softly at me.

My body must have given away what horrors I was relieving as I saw my own reflection behind her. I was paler and my eyes looked like they had hollowed with sudden dark circles around them. I looked like I'd seen a ghost and trying to look like one myself.

"Do you need a moment Bobby?" Linda asks me softly. I looked back to her and shake my head. "I... I want to get this done with... s.. so I can move on."

Linda nodded, giving me a supportive smile.

With a deep breath I turn back to the detective and focus on his face, a look of concern that soon turns to something of uncertainty. I can no longer keep myself looking at him directly and take to looking at my hands as we continue. He has me tell him again what I have written and reads it to me once more.

"Alright, I think we have what we need from you Bobby. You can go. I'll be in contact if we find out anything more about how you got there. Until then, it appears there is no need to worry about it happening again. We currently have a suspect and there is no way he'll be getting to you now. You can go." He picks the papers in front of him up and taps them lightly on the table to straighten them out before he stands to leave. I look at him surprised, but also relieved, standing as well and letting Linda help lead me out of the interrogation room.

I'm surprised to see the children from the hospital seating or standing outside of the room. Another child had joined them, this one sporting gaze around his head and around his chin and face. They all looked as I had upon coming in to give my statement. They look at me and must read the look on my face and take it as an ill omen.

"I'll be talking with you lot next shortly." The detective stated before going to take my file and most likely put it away in the file cabinet Linda had spoken to me of.

"He didn't take you seriously did he." The one I believe I remembered to be called Richie more stated at me then asked. I can't help but shrug.

"I can't really say. Though I doubt it. The people in this town... they just shake it off and act like nothing strange ever happens here."

"Excuse me?" Linda pipes up behind me, crossing her arms and giving me a questioning look.

"That is everyone but you Lin." I blush a bit embarrassed for making it sound like she hadn't taken my side. "You are the first person to ever listen."

"They won't listen to us either." Richie grumbled. "They're blaming Henry Bowers for all the murders. Guy was crazy, but he didn't kill everyone. He was too stupid." The others in the group nodded in agreement.

"Henry didn't kill those kids." Bill reaffirms, "I don't doubt he killed his dad and his gang members, but the clown got the others."

My throat tightened upon his words.

"C...clown?" My words stutter as I ask, as if the thought of that monster in my nightmare has shaken me to the point of struggling to speak.

The children looks at me as if they aren't sure if they should say anything more, or said too much already. Linda looks confused by it all, but stays quiet, observing for now.

"P..p...pp...Pennywise?" I struggle to even name that mad crazed specter. A fear builds in my chest, constricting my insides, I struggle to breath as I wait for an answer.

Their eyes widen with surprise and is then even dread?

"How do you know that name?" The one with a cast that says loser, scribbled into love, asks just as panicked as me. He takes a hit on his inhaler as he stares from me to the others.

"Adults don't see him. They never believe us cause he makes them ignore him, invisible to them. Anything strange as well for that matter." The larger set child informs me.

"He filled my bathroom with blood...my father couldn't see it at all." The young red headed girl pipes in. "Only these guys could see it like me."

I turn to Linda who is in shock of what she's hearing.

"L..L..Lin..." She has to be connecting the dots like I am. She looks at me and I can see she has.

"Have any of you experienced black outs?" I'm thankful she's asking for me. I struggle all the more to speak as this news unravels before us.

"Wait a minute! You tell us how you know that assholes name and then we'll talk." Thick glasses Richie barks at us in the most demanding manner I think I've heard a child speak to an adult. With a deep breath, I fidget as I try to push the answer out.

"N..nn..nightmare." I can feel myself pale remembering what I had so happily forgotten.

"He..He ... in my n.. la..last .night." The image of Linda's severed talking head bring bile up in my throat, "He...he told..me."

Everyone now is looking at me shocked. As if I'm suddenly speaking nonsense and I fear now is when everyone will say it's my imagination. Like all the times before. They'll say 'That's a mighty big imagination you got there Robert my boy.' Or 'careful what you say. They'll put you in the loony bin son.' I screw my eyes tight, tensing for the verbal blow. But it doesn't come.

"Last night?" Bill speaks calmly as he asks. I peek, relaxing a bit as I nod. The children look suddenly deathly pale. Those who were standing now take to their seats.

"Y...yes." I look at them all worried. Bill looks worn as he seems to take in what I've said. All seem to have fallen into a depression.

"IT's not dead then..." Bill states to the group. "IT will be back, but until then, It can't hurt us or anyone else. you remember what IT says, IT's hibernating. We just have to be ready for it when the time comes."

"But how long?" They all seem to be thinking this, though it's Stan that says it.

"I saw us as adults the next time IT's here." Beverly speaks up calmly. "Until then, IT's weak and will not be able to come after the children

of Derry."

The group seems to accept this answer, though I have little understanding what they mean.

Where they trying to say that clown in my nightmare was the thing that attacked and ate all those children? I rush to the closest trash bin just in time before the bile I've held back this long forces it's way out. Linda rubs my back softly as I heave. Hoping it will stop soon as it started.

"But...why would IT be bothering him?" I'm not sure who asks, but I can hear it is Bill that answers.

"I'm not sure...but maybe, we can find out. They seem to believe us. They're not like the other adults."

"You're right about that kid." I look up as I finish to see Linda smiling at the children.

"I think we need to all talk and figure this out. Not here though." She looks around as if to make sure no one has started to listen in or stare.

"Where can we met and talk where no one will be snooping?" I look at her curiously. Did she mean to find out what she could from these kids and see what it had to do with me?

They group seems to think this over, chatting quietly amongst themselves before answering Linda's question.

"Quarry. We can meet there and talk. Well bring what we know if you bring anything you know as well."

I watch the exchange curiously as Linda seems to act like she's thinking this over. As if she's trading governments secrets between countries. I can tell though her mind was already made up the moment she asked where we could meet in private.

"Alright. Agreed." She smiled at me assuringly before seeming to remember something. She returned her attention to the kids.

"I'm sure you weren't going to already, but just in case, my advice is not to mention the clown. Bobby and myself have reasons to believe you, but they sure as hell won't believe one word. If you can, build it up on the Bowsers kid. Make him the fall. You've already confirmed what Bobby and I already wondered. The people of Derry are bewitched and have no clue what's going on."

They all agree to do as she's suggested. I'm not even upset they will. For once I'm not the only one that knows something is very wrong with this town and now I'm not longer alone. The others can stay in their oblivious state. I have people I can trust and tell what's happened to me and know they won't tell me I'm imagining things.

I feel the tension in my body begin to fade and in so long I feel calm. But I fear it won't last. Not when I'm suddenly staring at Georgie Denbrough. His smile full of holes where baby teeth have come free. He's stands still, dressed in a yellow rain coat and boots. A red balloon in one hand. A bloody stump of muscles and tendons where his other arm should be. His coat is streaked with the bright red blood. Dripping and pooling on the floor. A puddle forms, a mix of blood and water. His coat looks like he just came in from the rain. I take a peek outside, but it's clear.

He seems to smile all the more as I look back to him, paling as he watches me. His skins slowly deteriorating before my eyes.

"They'll float soon..." Black like sludge comes dripping out as he speaks. "If you don't stop soon."

I'm about to question him when the lights behind Georgie seem to flicker, a dark tall figure appearing behind him. Lacing his hands around Georgie's shoulders before the rest of him becomes visible.

"Old Pennywise is still hungry. You wouldn't want him snacking on your little friends, now would you?"

My mouth goes dry as I watch Georgie's flesh just slides away like slime. There is nothing left but a Skelton of the boy I had seen. Pennywise grins, picking up what's left of Georgie, as if the boy were but a doll, holding him like a puppet.

"You don't want Bill to end up like me, do you?" Georgie's skull appears to move on his own as it speaks. A sick version of a ventriloquist act.

"He'll float too. He'll float too. HE'LL FLOAT TOO!"

"NO!" I don't even register what I'm doing. It's as if I'm only watching what happens next. I've picked up a chair and before I can stop myself, I've hurled it at the clown.

Instead of hearing a cry of pain or surprise, I hear that disturbing clown laughter as the sound of breaking glass reaches my ears moments later.

Everyone around me has frozen. People from other rooms look out to see what the noise is about.

I slowly relies that I've thrown a chair at a mirror and what left of it my own shocked reflection shows back.

I'm shaking as I'm taking in deep breaths. Confusion plan on my face as I look to the group. They all look frightened, as if they've seen a ghost. As I look to Linda, I see concern and the same confusion as my own.

"He...he wa..was m.. me." I already sound like I've been crying before the tears begin. "G..Georgie...he..." I can't finish it. Sobs rack my body.

"He did that to me too." I looked startled to Bill. That clown used Bill's own brother to torture him?

"He'd show up..but it wasn't him." I didn't even register that Bill had come over and placed his hand on my arm, trying to calm me.

"We all saw him do it the last time." Bill says looking so broken.

"It's not Georgie. It's not real. Nothing IT shows you is real."



## 6. Chapter 6

"Why do I have to wear this nasty smelling bird colored shit?" I grumbled as Linda only rubs all harder for my comment.

"This isn't bird shit Bobby. This is sunscreen. I'm trying to keep your pale ass from burning and becoming fried chicken. Now hold still!"

I groan as I finally do as told. The stuff smells awful to me. It messes with my sense of smell and feels so oily as she lathers it on every patch of skin she can find bare on me. With it messing with my senses, setting them off in ways I just can't handle, I do nothing more than dislike it.

I've always had a hard time with my senses. All of them can be set off in a good way, or in the worst way. With my sense of smell, things can smell awful and off for me, but no one else will even notice it. My sense of touch, things may feel fine for others, but for me it can feel overly too rough. My sense of taste, it may taste fine to others, but for me it can be disgusting. With my sense of sight, like today, the sun feels too bright for me.

Linda told me it has something to do with me having blue eyes, but I don't know for sure. I'm not calling her a liar, but I like to double check some the things she says at times. I have a habit of correcting her when I do find something that isn't true she's said. Of course she doesn't enjoy that half the time. One of those times, "Linda! It says you won't ruin your eye sight if you sit in front of the tv too close." That didn't go over too well. She still yells at me if I get too close to the tv screen.

My attention comes back to the present as I frown at her. "I'm pretty sure I don't burn. I can't remember a single time I've had a sunburn." Even so I keep my arms spread for her to continue her work.

"That's because I'm always there slathering this all over you dummy." She's frustrated, but not actually upset with me. I can already see her grinning from the corner of my eye as she finishes lathering me up.

"There. That should keep you safe." She smiles at her work, snapping

the lid shut on the lotion as I continue to glare at her.

"Why did I have to take my shirt off and let you put it in my back? The shirt would have been enough." I pull said shirt back on over my head. My hair getting smeared and oiled by the lotion on my face. I grunt and whine as I try to get the stuck hair out of my eyes. The lotion is already making them sting.

"I'm not taking any chances. I've been reading up on sun exposure and I'm not chancing you getting skin cancer." She swatted me lightly before gesturing to herself. "Now you get me. I got the parts I could by myself but I want you to get my back."

"Damn, you sound like Eddie's mom."

We both turn to see the children have arrived. They set their bikes aside as they come over.

"Like seriously, She's nuts!" Richie continues from his first remark as Eddie glares at him.

"Well I'm not that crazy, yet. No offense." Linda smiles apologetically to Eddie.

"You know my mom?" Eddie looks surprised at her.

"Sad to say, I believe everyone in town does bud. Not just the police department. I've heard the fire department gets a lot of calls. Many about supposed gas smells. Us it's possible break ins or people lingering outside the windows." Linda looks like she's ready to rant, but holds back for Eddie's sack.

He in turn looks greatly embarrassed. Just now really taking in how much of a reputation his mother has.

"I thought she knew what was right...turns outs she's only been keeping me away from the world. Stuffing me with gazebo's she say's are for things I don't really have."

We all just stare at him confused. It's Richie that breaks down in a fit of laughter, breaking the silence first.

"Gazebos? She's been forcing down one of those bandstands on you? Learning to play the tuba?"

"What?" Eddie looks ready to strangle his friend, but Linda butts in quickly.

"Eddie, I believe the word you are looking for is placebos. Gazebos are those things you see in the park. A small structure with a roof." She smiles so sweetly at him that I see him turn from an angry red to a bright pink. He's obviously blushing now.

I mean it shouldn't be surprising that a young boy would form a crush on her. I guess she's fairly attractive. It's just, I've never seen her that way. It takes me a moment to refocus, looking away from her to the children.

We all take a seat at a lone picnic table while Linda pulls out the files from her bag. The children pull out their own stack of findings as well.

I eye both stacks, frowning, "How long has this been happening?"

"There has been stories as far back as before the town of Derry formed." Ben filled Linda and me in.

"From all my research it did at the library, people have been disappearing from the start."

"That can't be possible." The words slip past my lips before I can really think on what I'm saying. "No one can live that long."

"You've seen IT, time doesn't matter to that thing. IT's been here from the start. IT's been picking people off, scaring and then eating them for centuries. The founding fathers of Derry disappeared without a trace." Ben continued.

"Until at some point IT picked us kids as IT's main course!" Richie complained. I couldn't blame him or any of the other children as the became gloomy at that reminder.

A thought occurs to me, "Wait, this thing has been going after kids this whole time? How hasn't the whole town disappeared?"

Bill is the one to present the reason why that hasn't happened.

"There is a time limit. IT only shows up every twenty seven years to 'feast', as IT says, before IT goes to sleep for another twenty seven. IT stocks us for a year. IT got Georgie... and a lot of people we knew from school..."

"Sometimes IT doesn't even sleep that long." Ben mumbled, "There are times I found that IT shows up out of the blue. Times when something bad happens."

He pulls a page out from his stack, presenting it before Linda and myself, then he continued.

"When ever there is a major accident ending in death and blood shed, IT shows up."

I skim the page over, as does Linda beside me. I frown seeing the evidence. A mass explosion on Easter, killing families. Gangsters at another time starting a shoot out. All of these things trigger a sudden toll of missing persons, mainly children, after they occur.

I can't pull my eyes away from the text. Even after I've finished reading, I can't look away. My head is slowly beginning to ache, my vision growing dark, I'm feeling suddenly dizzy and I can't handle what is presented in front of me.

The mayhem alone should make me feel this way, but it's the sudden memories that cause me to feel bile rise in my throat. I looked up quickly, no longer wanting to read it anymore, but as I do, things are suddenly no longer quite right.

In front of me, the group of children are still there, but now there are others. I'm seeing children happily running about with baskets. Doesn't take long to guess that they are looking for Easter Eggs, but they are not wearing modern clothing of the late or even early eighties. This clothing is foreign to this time. Centuries too late.

I shake my head violently, gulping for air as I get up quickly, stumbling backwards as I nearly fall over my seat. When I regain my balance, I feel a tug on my sleeve. I turn to see what has

caused it, only to see a most horrifying sight.

A small girl in her Sunday best, at least what is left of it and her. She's severely burned, even missing part of her head, and her other arm is gone. Behind her I see a group of other children. All in different states of similar horror.

"Help us find some eggs mister?"

It's not real. It's not real! IT'S NOT REAL!

I slam my hands over my ears. I can feel the tears form in my distress behind my closed eyes. I no longer hear the voice. I no longer hear anything but screaming.

I suddenly feel hands on my shoulders as my eyes shot open. I see Linda's mouth moving, but I don't comprehend what she's saying. It's as if I'm watching a silent film unfold in front of me. But she seems to be saying the same thing over and over. As she does for the umpteenth time, I slowly make out her words.

"Bobby, just breath. Slow deep breaths. Come on Bobby."

I stare a moment longer before I slowly do as I'm told. My hearing begins to clear as I do so. My throat feels suddenly raw and I reach up to it confused.

"Bobby, you were having a panic attack. You started screaming. You're safe. It's going to be alright. Nothing that happened to you was real. Whatever you heard or even say, it wasn't real."

I look past her to the children and they all look worried.

"She's right Bobby. Nothing IT shows you is real." Bill assures me. "Fear gives IT strength. I know it's hard, but you have to learn to not to fear IT."

I let out a shaky breath, whipping at my wet cheeks, "How do I do that Billy? How do I stop fearing something like IT?"

## 7. Chapter 7

"Bobby I need you to just take a seat and try and calm down." Linda guides me back to a my seat. I'm still shaking like a leaf caught in a summer storm, but at least I am able to breath more normal again.

"We need to try and think this over and through before you start to panic any further." She spoke clear and calmly to me and the children. I try to listen the best I can in my current state of mind. She continues to rub circles on my back as she continued to speak.

"Now, what we need to do first is figure out some things." She looked to the children, speaking firm, but some how still soft.

"I need you all to tell me what happened and how you over came this thing."

Their tale of what happened felt like such. A tale, a myth, a story, but I know from the looks on their faces it was nothing but truths.

"After we beat him, he fell into a hole near the tower." Bill explains with a solemn tone as he comes to the end of their experience.

"He disappeared from sight, as if scattering into pieces as he went. It was too dark to see what was left of IT. We got out of there as fast as we could and went to the hospital. They were the ones that called the police."

Linda had a look of thought, deep thought at that, on her face.

"He fell into a hole... how many holes where there down there?"

The children looked at each other confused before they answered, "There was only one ma'am." Bill spoke with a look of concern on his face, "Why?"

Linda turned to look at me and I looked at her confused.

"W... what?" My voice went up a pitch as I suddenly stuttered. She looked at him worried and a bit something else. I wanted to say I didn't know what it was, but that voice that had been so silent in the back of my head this long knew. It said, 'FEAR.'

"Bobby... you told me that you climbed your way out of a hole before coming upon that tower with the dead children scattered around it. Correct?" She speaks calmly, though I thought I heard a bit of a waver in her voice.

"Y... yes. I.. I.. I did. W..ww... why?" Why was I stuttering so horribly now? I never stuttered like this before, nor ever in my whole life until now. Why suddenly is it becoming more and more of a habit?

"I.. I th.. thought I... I w...was being ww.. watched."

Linda nodded taking my words in, "Bobby... how long have you been having trouble talking."

She'd noticed as much as I myself have.

"A...a..after...I...I..I came b..back.. home." I swallow hard, my own worry growing and a feel of fear clawing it's way up from the pit of my stomach. Digging it's claws deep into my throat.

Bill seems to notice how odd it is now that Linda has brought it up. The other children just look confused while Bill looks to Linda and back at me.

"I have a stutter... but... it hasn't been as bad of late. Not since IT disappeared."

Linda starts tapping her fingers on the table between the group of us. Looking like she's connecting pieces to an invisible puzzle before her. One that she alone can see.

"Did any of you see or hear Bobby at any point while this monster was after you all?"

I feel as confused as the children look now as I try to put together what she is seeing and we can't.

"No ma'am. At least I don't remember ever seeing or hearing him." Mike speaks up and the rest nod in agreement.

"We only ever saw IT and what creatures IT wanted us to see. Mostly a Clown." Beverly confirmed for the group.

"IT goes after children, rarely adults..." Linda begins to let her thoughts wander a aloud, share them as she let the pieces connect.

"Both Bobby and you all saw the children, but the difference has been that when you saw them they had been floating and when they descended from above to the ground. Bobby saw them only after they were laying on the ground. You say that they began to float down after IT had disappeared.... is it possible that Bobby was floating up there as well? You spoke of how IT had done a similar thing to Beverly, could that have happened to Bobby?"

The children take this new question, mulling over it a bit, but it's Richie that speaks up.

"We didn't see him up there... but from what you said... maybe he was in the hole the whole time. Like a zombie or something?"

The children seem to think this possible. They had explained Beverly was very much in a zombie like state before they could wake her from whatever Pennywise had done to her.

Could it be possible this thing had done a similar thing to me?

"But why would he need Bobby? Why would he suddenly be having issues like stuttering?" Richie was asking good questions and I couldn't think of anything that would make sense to answer them with.

"Before he disappeared...IT began to stutter..." Linda and I look at Bill confused.

"Bill's right." Eddie added, "We all heard it. IT was losing. IT actually looked afraid and was starting to stutter. He was, he was quoting that thing Bill always says."

"He thrusts his fists against the posts and still insists he sees the ghosts." Bill spoke softly, not a single stutter.

"They're right...IT was saying it... quoting me... stuttering..."

"Could what he did with Beverly, have been done to Bobby and affected him? Transferred those issues to him before he could be woke from IT's spell?" I can hear the urgency in Linda's tone of voice.

The children looked lost. They obviously didn't know the answer to anything like this.



"Linda..." I try to speak softly as I reach over to touch her shoulder. I don't usually touch other people, but in this moment I feel I need to do so to help calm her.

"Linda... they don't know. They, ... they only kn...know a little more then w..w...we did until now."

She looks at me, I can see moisture collecting in her eyes. She looks like she's about to break down. I can't help the look of concern and confusion that appears on my face.

"This bo..bothers you th..this much, wh...what happened to me?"

It's her turn to look at me with concern and confusion. I must have said the wrong thing cause the dame finally breaks and the tears begin to flow over and fall.

"H... how can you ask that Bobby Gray? You've been my best friend ever since I met you after moving here. You're like a brother to me. I worry about you no matter how small the issues you have. Someone hurts you, I'd hunt them down to the ends of the earth and beyond if I am able."

I can feel my eyes grow wide as my shock of how much she really cares about me really hit home. I'm speechless as my mouth hangs open. I had felt this way about her so long. How could I have the feeling she did feel the same about me? Why suddenly had I felt upon any moment this all could have changed? I should never have let myself believe that at some moment if things got too crazy she would dump me and run. Call me crazy or say I imagined it all.

I feel my own tears form as springs, trickling slowly down my cheeks. I never actually thought that or felt that. That isn't what I think of over. A false feeling of betrayal had made its way there in one sitting and a handful of frightening moments.

This monster was not only messing with my eyes and ears, it was messing with my thoughts and truths I knew of Linda, my sister.

Linda suddenly wraps tight around me, holding me to her as I listen to her labored breathing. I feel her warm breath brush my neck and

ear as hot tears wet my shirt.

"Bobby, I will never leave you. I love you, you silly ass. I'm not some random person in your life. I'm not those people that have always told you it's all in your head. I never will be Bobby."

She leaned back, smiling at me with glistening eyes, she leans in and kisses my cheek softly.

I can't help the smile that forms on my face.

"I love you too Linda. You've always been like a sister to me...I.. I don't know why I ever would let myself even think you would ever change. That you would ever leave me like everyone else. This thing is messing with my head...I'm so sorry."

Linda just snorted, laughing through her tears.

"You idiot." I don't even resist as she puts me into a headlock, rubbing my head half heartedly.

"This asshole won't strong enough to break us up."

"Ma'am, Bobby... I had a thought." Bill looked sorry for interrupting our moment, but we just smiled at him. Linda nodded for him to continue.

"What would that be Bill?" Linda sniffled, rubbing what was left of the tears away.

He looks uncertain to say what he is thinking now, but I can see when he decides it was best to just go ahead and say it.

"We haven't been seeing IT, Pennywise, I mean when he shows up to torment Bobby..."

The others, including Linda and myself are now giving Bill our full attention.

Bill swallowed, now looking all the more nervous.

"IT Said it was going to sleep... but Bobby didn't see IT after he woke... w.. what if there is a reason for that?"

It's my turn to feel uncertain and nervous as they all now stare at me. I look all the more confused by what he might mean.

Linda looks like she is thinking his words over seriously, while the other children now seem to want to step back and away from me.

"W... what?" I feel my chest tighten at all their reactions. 'Fear.'

"Bill... are you suggesting that this creature, Pennywise, IT, may have hidden away inside of Bobby?"

I can't keep my jaw from dropping at the words, my forgotten panic rising again.

Could it be that monster had hidden in me? Hiding from his bitter end like a coward, only to torment me?

"It... it could be possible... I mean we don't know that much about IT." Ben speaks up softer, uncertainty and fear present in his voice.

I feel bile rise to my throat before I can stop it. It's fast and I can't get up and away in time.

I lean over and retch what was inside. My breakfast making itself visible in a new form to the world. I feel dizzy and suddenly the world is blacking out as I feel heavy.

"BOBBY!" I can feel Linda's hands on me, pulling me to her as she keeps me from falling backwards, or worse into the vile mess I've made.

"Bobby, you need to breath, please. Count to ten and breath." She's trying her hardest to sound strong, but I can hear the strain in her voice.

"Can you kids help me get him back to the car? I want to get him into some AC."

I feel Linda's strong hands pulling me up to help me so she could walk me to the car. I'm assuming it's Bill that I feel helping to take my other side as they both hold my arms behind their heads, over their shoulders and pretty much drag me to Linda's squad car.

I hear the door click open and feel them help me into the front passenger seat. Linda runs to the driver's side and starts the car, blasting the AC and pointing the vents towards me.

"It'll take a while to get it cool enough. Just keep breathing Bobby." I

can hear her voice growing with worry.

"Bill, thanks for helping me get him here."

"It's no problem ma'am." He sounds like he genially means it.

"I shouldn't have said anything. We don't even know if something like that could happen."

"I know Bill. You just are trying to help."

I grunt in agreement, though it sounds more like a moan.

"See even Bobby agrees." I hear Linda's voice lighten knowing I was alright.

"I'm sorry I upset you so Bobby...Please feel better."

I manage to crack my eyes open with a strained smile. "It's... okay."

He smiles to see I'm not upset. Nodding before he heads back to his friends.

"You stay here while I talk to them." Linda makes her way out of the car and down to the kids.

Today has been such a mess, but at least we have gotten more info on whatever this thing is. Though now, I have a new worry.  
Could I be trusted?

## 8. Chapter 8

I must have drifted off at some point as I waited cause as I open my eyes I see Linda at the wheel, driving us back to my place.

"Good to see you waking up." Linda grins at me, giving me a side ways glance before focusing back on the road. "Feeling better?"

I nodded slightly before sitting up, struggling against the seatbelt. She must have buckled me in while I was out.

"Yeah... a bit..." I mumble, finally getting myself sitting up straight in my seat. Darn seatbelts feel more of a burden then a safety at times.

"I figured it was getting too hot out there for ya and all those attacks you were having. A little AC is what you needed."

I nod agreeing with her. "Yeah, you always know me better then I do." I let a chuckle escape.

Linda was smiling at that.

"Sounds like you are doing better then a bit Bobby. You just rest, we'll be back at your place shortly and I'll make something for you to eat after I get you a nice ice water."

"Lin, you really don't have to do that for me. I know how to take care of myself."

"Don't you start with me Bobby Gray. After that spell, I want you to rest and let me take care of you. You must be exhausted after all that and the stress. I feel it and I don't have attacks like you do." She sighed, going from smiling at me to a gloomy look towards the road ahead.

"I think you should stay home tomorrow Bobby. I can call in and explain to your boss what's been happening."

"NO! Lin, I can handle it. I, I don't want to be stuck at home right now." The last thing I need is to be stuck by myself as she goes to work and leaving me to my own panicked minds imagination. Or worse, that creature Pennywise's own devices he considers to be fun.

"Linda, I don't want to be alone right now. If that... that thing is actually messing with me from the inside out, I don't want to be left alone with IT."

Linda seems to be taking this into consideration. Biting at her lip as she thinks before sighing, obviously coming to a hard decision to answer my request.

"You're right Bobby. Right now being alone would not be the best thing for you. Get your mind off it all would be good, doing work could do that. Along with keeping you from being alone with that thing. I have requests though since I'm agreeing to let you go."

"You mean demands." I snort, giving her a sly look. I know it's more an inconvenience what she'll ask most likely for me personally then she'll admit to me.

Rolling her eyes at my comment, Lin glares a moment at me, "Do you want to go to work?" She grumbled which I can do nothing but nod, mumbling yes under my breath.

"Now, what I want is you to call me when you take breaks and if anything, ANYTHING BOBBY, happens. Be it real or not, you call and tell me. I have a desk round today and will be by the phone all day. That's my request."

I sigh heavily, but nod, "Yes, I promise to call no matter what Lin. Real or not, I'll call and tell you what is going on. Anything else? Want me to wear a collar with my name and address and return to owner Officer Linda of Derry Police Department?"

I didn't even see it coming, "OW!" I yelp as soon as she lands the punch to my arm. I rub it glaring at her, "What the hell was that for?"

"Your sassy ass comment dick." She snaps, glaring ahead.

My brows rise in my surprise, she's genially angry at me. I've never seen that before in my life.

"I'm trying to keep you safe you little shit and you sassing me and acting like a dick over a simple request as calling me is not welcomed. Bobby, I swear, I may look calm, but I'm freaking out!"

I stare confused, seeing tears began to form in her eyes. She still

hasn't turned to look at me, giving the road the her most angry look I have ever seen.

"I was trying hard not to let you see how this is all affecting me, but your dumb ass just had to push and send me over the edge. Bobby, you are a brother to me and to hear all this.. this crazy shit... I'm scared. I'm genially scared for your safety and sanity. You aren't crazy, but if this thing is left alone with you, if we can't get rid of it, I'm scared you'll lose it and snap. You have no idea how many people I've had to deal with that seemed normal and now... now they should be in an asylum. I don't ever want you to end up in a place like that Bobby. So don't you sass me ever again or so help me..."

The tears are flowing now, she wipes at her eyes, trying her best to get her vision clear.

I feel my gut flip watching and hearing all she is saying. I didn't even know I was joining tearing up until I felt something warm and wet dripping on my shirt. I join in trying to wipe my own tears away, sniffing as my nose begins to run.

"Lin...I .. I didn't mean anything by it." I feel so stupid, mumbling my apology, I wonder if she even heard me, but then I see her reach out and wrap her hand around my own.

"I forgive you Bobby. I love you. I will always forgive you, no matter how much a dick you are."

I snort, bursting into a fit of laughter, "Yeah yeah, I'm an asshole. I'm sorry." I sigh heavily as I look out my window, letting her continue to hold and squeeze my hand, with a soothing rub of her thumb across it ever so often. In rare of occasions like this, I don't hate the feel of another persons touch, well not any person, only Linda's.

"I know this isn't all just you meaning to be Bobby. You've had two days full of stress and panic attacks after waking up in a dark hole all alone. No idea how long you've been there and then to see all the things you saw... I would be an out right bitch myself." She chuckled lightly. I can hear the sorrow in her laugh, though she tries to hide it.

"I'm sorry Linda."

She actually turns to look at me, a sad bu thankful smile crosses her

lips. Another caring squeeze from her hand and we both know we've made up and forgive the other entirely.

"How about I add ice cream to the menu tonight?"

My lips pull up into the biggest grin I can muster.

"Can we?" I'm eager for some and hope she's bought Neapolitan.

"Yep. Dinner first then some Neapolitan Ice Cream."

I can't holdback my excitement, as I fidget about cheering in celebration.

I love chocolate, strawberry is second, vanilla can't really make it alone though. It has to either join to make a trio or make friends with chocolate syrup or toppings for my liking. I only enjoyed chocolate until Linda introduced the odd ice cream to me. After that it's been my pick when she goes to the store.

It's a circus of frozen dairy, it's three flavors the stripped tent hiding inside the amazing flavors.

Linda just laughs all the more at my excitement. All signs of hurt and sadness gone for the moment.

We spend the rest of the ride in silence, grins on our faces.

I can't help but feel this odd sensation that my home is slowly decaying in front of me. The homes around it inching further away, fading as they do so.

No matter how hard I stare, I can't see any sign of life or movement in or around those homes. No noise, no movement, not even light.

You'd expect a single light in at least a room, but nothing. There aren't even any flood lights on in the front. Not even a single porch light to piece the darkness consuming the homes.

"Bobby... you alright? You're spacing off there." Linda already has unfastened her own seatbelt to get out. She looks concerned, reading my face closely as she waits for me to focus on her.



"Lin...is it just me or do the houses around my home feel...off?"

She looks perplexed by my question before she turns to stare at them herself.

I can actually watch and see as she begins to realize what I mean.

"Maybe...maybe they're all on vacation?"

I give her a skeptical look.

"All of them and not leaving a single light on somewhere? Not to mention I'm pretty sure they've moved."

She has a look of skepticism before looking back and studying them again. A distinct look of confusion to what I can tell quite well as fear. 'Tasty Fear.'

I jolt straight, staring forward unfocused.

That voice, I've been hearing it all day, but not reacting to it, but with that new word added my heart is racing and I can no longer pretend it isn't there.

I can feel the start of a panic attack as my chest grows tight. It takes Linda's sudden touch of my hand to snap out of anxiety's grasp.

"Hey, you just went pale. What happened." She squeezes my hand softly as I take a steadying intake of breath.

"The voice...IT's voice, I keep hearing it in the back of my mind."

Before I can protest, Linda has already pulled me into a tight hug.

"It's just a voice. He can't hurt you or make you do anything against your will."

I hug her back, if not a bit tighter, "I...I'll remember that."

"Good," She pulls free and grabs the handle to my door, shaving it open, "out of the car so I can start cooking."

I roll my eyes, but grin as I do as told, shutting it behind me. I head

to the front door of the house, Linda following shortly, making sure her cruiser is locked up before jogging up to unlock the house for us.

## 9. Chapter 9

Dinner was actually calming that night. After Linda had made steaks and fries, a fancy surprise, she scooped us both up some nice helpings of Neapolitan Ice Cream. She even had drenched mine in chocolate and strawberry syrup, just how I like it.

Afterwards she had told me she was going to run and get some of her things to have a longer stay in one of my guest rooms. I was honestly thankful to hear that though I wasn't too thrilled that she ordered me to go bath and get ready for bed while she was away.

I maybe strange and a bit slow at times, but I'm not a child, though she said otherwise by my pouting. Can one really blame me for not liking being treated as such.

It was overly unnaturally quiet while she was away. I couldn't help but obey the urge to lock the bathroom door as I got ready. I found it even hard to close my eyes as I rinsed my hair or washed my face. Ever wanting to keep an eye out or stare at the door as if at any moment that Helios clown and IT's nightmarish horrors would come bursting through if I dared look away or even blink.

I nearly pissed myself when Linda came back. She was so quiet and myself so exhausted. When she knocked my my bedroom door I was starting to doze, slowly tipping forward into an uncomfortable manner with an embarrassing amount of drool. So much drool I nearly thought I had pissed myself only to be relieved it was just drool.

She's had a good laugh as I glared her down for scaring me and finding it amusing. She merely Igbo ed me and asked if I wanted her to tuck me in and stay till I fell asleep. Sheepish as I felt about wanting to take the offer, I accepted with a gracious thanks as she sat in next to me after making sure I was comfortable and snuggling tucked in.

She didn't tease me when she did this and had asked me quite seriously beforehand. She knew how frightening all this was for me and I could only imagine how she was taking all this herself.

Once the light was out I found it hard to close my eyes. The room wasn't pitch black by any means. The curtains were open to let the light from outside in. Though the street light wasn't of much help as it flickered. Playing a cruel game of will I stay on it blunt you into darkness.

The moon though was thankfully taking over the roll of outdoor light source. With the storm of the night before gone and the sky clear and cloudless, the full sphere was ever welcomed. It's bright rays felt like a beacon of hope after so much darkness these past few days.

I finally allowed my self to trust that with Linda near, I had little to fear. The bright illumination of the moon my second form of protection. Two guardians looking over me as I slept.

As I relaxed, I was aided ever more when Linda began to hum softly. It want much, but some how it was ever more calming, like a lullaby to a babe.

As I drifted off to the sound, and my guards watching over, I thought I heard a deep but ever soothing voice. One you expect to come from a older gentleman, an elder grandfather perhaps?

'You're safe Bobby. Sleep now.'

I was too far gone to really think if I was already dreaming to question such a voice. I felt I had heard it before and knew it well. Not frightening like the clowns shrill one. This sounded new, yet at the same time one I hadn't heard in year. Perhaps I heard it once in childhood?

Next I knew, the sun was shunning brightly I to my eyes. I moaned in annoyance, peaking at my bed side clock. It was early, thankfully not too early but just enough time before I had to get up to get ready for work.

With groaning and a kick at my sheets, I freed myself from my bed and made my way down stairs. I could smell breakfast, Linda was cooking again, another treat. I would often just pour myself a bowl of cereal or toast some bread for a quick meal and dash to get ready for work. But a second day of breakfast was greatly welcomed.

"Morning Lin. It smells wonder." I sniffed eagerly, hovering behind over her shoulder.

"It's almost down, go sit down." She threatens to hit me with the spatula, which I quickly avoided by doing as told.

"You sound like you slept well. How are you feels by?"

"Good, though ever annoyed by sunlight ruining my beauty sleep. What about you? I hope the guest room was alright."

"It was. I got it cleaned up fairly quickly after you fell asleep. A quick shower and I was out cold. Though at one time during the night I could have sworn you were in the doorway watching me. But it couldn't have been. You have such beautiful blue eyes, these were yellow and freakishly glowing. You've got me seeing things now in my sleep." Linda tried to joke about it, but I could make out the distress in her voice all the same.

"I didn't move from my bed that I know of. Last thing I remember was you humming a nice tune and then I was out. Had to kick to get free of the sheets from you tucking me in last night as well." I jested though it was true, I hadn't moved and was stuck upon waking. Though her mentioning glowing yellow eyes brought a shiver down my spin. The hair sticking up as it went. Those were the kinds of eyes that monster clown had. If I didn't know better I'd have said it was him. But it couldn't have been, he only was seen by me. Me describing him, along with the stress, that must have done it. She was imagining what the children and myself had described.

She looked surprised by my confession though, being trapped in a secure tuck of sheet doom,. Snorting as she dished our food onto two plates, one for each of us, she grinned unable to hold back what she had to say.

"Well I do pride myself in my tucking skills. How else do you think I kept all those brats I had to babysit in their beds? Not a single one willing would stay put. I'd have to trick them to get in the bed on time and in the end I never had a single one get free. It's an art."

Linda was beaming as she took her seat beside me.

"Wait...wouldn't that be considered child abuse?" I accused with a playful grin. "Being held captive and all.

"Nope. Though in my head they were all hogtied and gagged under those sheets and didn't make a peep. So I'd say they were lucky I never snapped and did that. You won't believe how many of those kids where spoiled brats. I had to blare the tv or music over them until they gave up screaming and cussing at me to let them go. They eventually feel asleep."

"If they were so bad, why did you even babysit them?"

I waited for an answer, nibbling away at my toast.

"Because my darlingly, precious, wonderful Bobby, no one else would. They scared off every single one. Which meant the parents were all the more desperate to pay a higher price to get someone willing. How do you think I even bought my first car?"

I hadn't even thought about how she had earned enough so quickly after she received her driving permit. She'd just shown up one day in it, grinning a gorgeous smile free finally of her braces. Sunglasses shielding from the bright sun of that bright shines day. I'd stated in shock and jested about her stealing it. That of course got me a slug to the arm before she dragged me over and forced me into the passengers seat.

"If I remember correctly I accused you of stealing it."

Linda growled, glaring with a nod.

"I didn't and for that I made you buy me celebratory ice cream for the occasion."

"That had been worth the joke and I would have done so anyway." I pointed out, gesturing for emphasis with my fork.

"You never did tell me when you got your permit, or license or that matter." Linda finally got back to her own food, picking up some eggs and bacon with her toast.

"I've never had one of either those. I never really had a reason to." I

shrug it off and look up after a bite to see a perplexed look on Lin's face.

"I could have sworn you did. How do you buy anything with a credit card if you don't have that for ID. Do you have another form?" She's stopped eating now, watching me like I'm a mystery brought before her.

"I..." I think it over and I grow wary, "I've never used a credit card. I don't think I've ever needed any of form of ID either. We live in such a small town. Everyone knows one anywhere. I've never needed to worry about it before."

I hear a huff come from her end as I take ketchup and pour it out over my eggs.

"What?"

Lin stares at me intently before squinting and then straighten to continue eating her own food.

"You'd have to have a school ID. You went to the same school as me and they'd have it on record. I'll just pop by and ask for a look."

It's rather brilliant she had thought of that. I forgot she's had one through every year attending.

But I knew she'd never find one.

"Lin, I didn't go to school with you."

She pauses mid bite to look at me for any sign of joking.

"You had to have. I remember us hanging out all the time. We were in all the same classes together. We went to prom together when no one asked me. How could you forget all that and say you didn't go to school with me."

She looked upset and I could feel the beginning of the heat rising with her anger from my words.

"Lin, it's true I went, but I was never enrolled. I tagged along and no

one ever said a word. Really now that I think about it, they never said anything about me not having homework or anything either..."

I can't help but now feel that I've been missing a huge chunk of sense in my life. Along with the issues of blacking out and no one pointing out I'd been missing, people seemed to not notice or care I was even there. No one but Linda.

"Th...that can't be right." Linda forced a chuckle. "I'll get the proof and you will see. Work for you first. We got to get going. All this talking is taking up time to eat. Finish up and get dressed and I'll drip you off at the TV Station. Can't be having you late on your first day back."

She worked to shovel her own food in and rush to clean up after.

I in return couldn't have the heart or the wish to prove her wrong. In fact I desperately wished her to find something to prove me wrong. That I did attend school with her. How else could I have been allowed to be around her all that time.

Perhaps I was confused.

I pushed it all aside and in the back corner of my brain.

My focus now was to finish this meal and get dressed properly for work.

I enjoyed my job there. Behind the scenes, cleaning, odd jobs. Helping move things or wrangle up things requested by others.

I was ever glad I never had to be the one showing up on live TV in the end.

Never...



## 10. Chapter 10

Shit.

That's the first word that went through my mind.

Upon entering the TV Station, a quick goodbye and wave to Linda before hand of course, I was stopped by one of the managers.

Of course my first thought was they'd yell at me for being absent for the past year, but stupid me forgot no one ever noticed or cared.

No this was perhaps even worse and an utter nightmare come true.

'Robert! Good you're here. We need you to fill in for Caroline. She phoned in I'll. Something about needing to check into the doctors for a mental health evaluation. Any way it was last minute and you're the only one the kids will talk to. They shell up with everyone else we've tried. So we need you to fill in. Come on!'

The manager had dragged me all the way as I tried to think of anything to get out of hosting. It was a live children's show and all of Derry would be watching.

The only thing I could get out in the end was the dumbest question at that moment.

'Were are you taking me?'

'Costume and make up. They'll have to work fast to think up a character for you.'

Now I'm sitting watching the artists dash about like worker ants. As soon as I entered they'd shoved me into a chair and began to put things on my face, my head, my hands, I don't even remember when they'd pulled me back up to change my clothes.

I'm in a daze as someone tries to walk me through what will happen next.

"Just read the cards. They'll have all the lines and cues for what to

do. Oh and today's a special day for one of the little girls. It's her sixth birthday and she gets to have a special set next to you. There will be a cake at one point and you, with the rest of the children, will sing happy birthday to her."

I just nod slowly, barely taking it in.

I'm pulled up quickly and ushered out to set. I have no idea what I look like up to this point and just barely get time to take it all in.

I stand wide eyed staring at one of the monitors. I'm partly amazed, but all the while horrified. My hair is hidden by long strands of red yarn, a sailors hat on top. I'm dressed in short overalls with high red and white striped socks. My hands are covered in long white gloves while my feet are in large buckled shoes. A short sleeve plaid dress shirt lays under the overalls with a black string tie.

When I see my face it all clicks.

The triangle red nose, the black painted eye lashes, and the red lips with black line smile.

The crew I thought might have dressed me as a clown, but it appears at least to me I'm meant to be a living Raggedy Andy Doll.

This is definitely a step in a better direction with all that's been going on at least.

I feel a tug from my pant leg and look down to see a young girl with brown wavy hair, part pulled up in a ponytail on top of her head. She's dressed in the most adorable dress, Precious Moments Characters all over it. A custom homemade dress made with a mother's love.

She's smiling shyly up at me and I can tell from the look on the mothers face off set that this is unlike her. A very shy girl having a sudden brave moment.

The girl fidgeted, looking away with a blush, before mumbling, every so quietly. I feel as though no one but myself heard.

"M...mister...it's my birthday."

She looked up, I barely could see past her bangs those wide blue eyes.

"Im this many years old." She giggled raising her hands to show six tiny fingers up to me.

All worry and thought about the show drained away as I instinctively knelt down to her level. Now I could see the shy eyes and the bright smile so clearly.

"My what a big girl. Six years old. Your nearly all grown."

I didn't quite sound like my usual self. It was odd, as if another me came through, a more playful side. It was as if my voice took upon a light sing songy tune. I smiled as big and bright as I could, matching the small girls own growing grin.

"What's your name Miss birthday girl?"

"Kayleigh."

She looked at me more head on, giggling at the voice I used.

I felt my hearts swell at her reaction. Her enjoyment at my play. My clown like mannerism with a doll like face.

Though the obnoxious laughter I'd heard so often of late was louder then ever at my fun. It took all of my attention on her to keep from snapping at that monstrous clowns teasing. I wasn't about to let IT ruin my fun. Not today.

"Well, Kayleigh, we have a special treat for you today. Will you be my special little helper for the day?"

I offered my hand with a genuine grin. She greeted in return with her own, taking my hand carefully.

"Yes Mr Clown Sir."

She giggled, skipping as we went to take our places on the set.

Taking a seat, she took her own beside me. Giggling and smiling

happily. Her mother I could see so happy was in tears to see her small girl so interactive and excited.

The other children where not as shy. All sitting about, surrounding us both on all sides.

Kayleigh scooted closer to me, trying not to let any of the kids get to close too her. A look of discomfort and growing fear having so many other strangers so close, I couldn't help but understand her reaction.

Two peas in a pod her and I.

I took her hand gently, squeezing it reassuringly.

"It's okay Kayleigh. Your mothers right there and I won't let anything happen while you're with me. I promise, or I'm not 'Pennywise, the Dancing Clown.'"

What did I just say?

The laughter grew all the louder at my slip of words and it took everything left of me to not let my warm smile slip and show the horror I felt building inside me.

Kayleigh was none the wiser, the brightest smile yet shinning for me alone to see.

I'd stay sane, I had to, for this little one. She trusted me. She was afraid of all the others but me.

"Okay, I trust you Mr Pennywise."

Her giggles thankfully drowned most of that monster's from my mind. My smile becoming genuine again as I saw how she trusted me. Just like Linda. I wasn't about to let that trust be ruined, not now, not ever.

Everything felt like a blur. I read the lines in the same silly voice. All the while holding Kayleigh's hand or keeping my arm protectively around her through out the show. By the time we drew near the end, we all were singing as a cake was rolled out, candles lite and burning strong, sparks flying about their flames. The lights had dimmed.

Darkening the room, it not enough to frighten the children.

As we finished our singing, the cake was in full view. It was fairly large, big enough for all the kids and their parents as well to enjoy. Kayleigh's name was written under the words Happy Birthday. Colorful frosting balloons about them.

The song ended and all were quiet. I lifted Kayleigh to my lap, keeping her steady as she looked from myself to the cake and back.

"Alright Miss Kayleigh, it's time to make a wish and blow the candles out to make it come true. Have you thought of what that wish is?"

She nodded shyly, but firmly, staring up at me. She tugged on my red yarn hair gently. I lent down and she spoke ever so softly, a whisper to my ear, a hand to cup and keep it from anyone who might be prying to over hear.

I made a surprised goofy face and listen very carefully.

"I want to float too."

If my face wasn't so pale already I think I would have looked as white as the make up I wore.

"P...pardon?" I try to hide the fright from my voice and smiled o hide the fear.

She whispers again, ever so clear, "A Teddy Ruxpin."

She looks worried now, as if she could tell my unease.

I quickly snap out of my trance, letting my smile grow, "then blow out the candles and see if your wish comes true?"

Her own smile returns. Her worry fading away as she turns on my laps and I hold onto her carefully so she won't fall.

With a deep breath and surprising power for one so small, she blows all the candles out. Clapping and laughter fills the room as the lights brighten again and balloons begin to fall.

I keep Kayleigh steady with one hand as I reach in surprise with the others at the balloons.

Kayleigh grabbing with both hands so eagerly to catch one.

I get one in a single try with my large free hand. Carefully bringing I down and handing it to Kayleigh's awaiting hands. So much joy can be seen on her face as she holds what I now notice is a bright red balloon. Giggling as she smiles up at me, hugging me before kissing my cheek

"Thanks Mister Pennywise for the best Birthday ever. I hope one day we'll all float too."

## 11. Chapter 11

I try my best to stay calm, but it's a losing battle.

As soon as the show is over I find a perfect time to escape. Quietly but quickly I rush back to the make up room I started in. As soon as I'm out of sight I begin tearing at the costume. Pulling it off as fast as I can. My breathing has become ragged from the effort and anxiety coming in at waves.

The shirt catches on my head, pulling at the wig harshly causing me to nearly yelp in pain before it comes free. Breathing deep the fresh air of freedom I notice something in my peripheral vision, turning towards it I can't stop the scream and sudden reflex as I lash out and punch the form in front of me.

All I see is white and red face paint before I hear a shattering crunch lead by a sharp pain in the hand I just sent flying. Another, less frightened and now more pained, scream leaves my lips as I pull my fist back and away from where it landed.

I see first that what I'm looking at is no longer single but multiple now. Shattered images stare back at me as I slowly begin to realize my own image is staring back at me. In my hurry I had forgotten I was wearing red and white makeup, now smeared from my fight to get free of the offending clothing.

I let out a long relieved sigh before hissing from the growing ache to a sharp pain in my hand. With a look down at it I can see blood pooling where small shards have found their home in my skin. I feel light headed as I'm sure all color has drained from me. With no wish to stick around and continue to let myself be the only one noticing my sanity slipping away, I hurriedly wrap my hand in a spare towel before rushing to dress and leave.

Trying hard not to get blood on my clothing as I dress quickly. As I make to open the door to run, it opens, causing me to jump.

The manager from earlier enters holding a plate with a slice of red velvet birthday cake upon it.

"Hey Bobby, the girl wanted me to make sure you got a slice."

He looks at me perplexed as I take the plate with my free hand, warbling from my shaken nerves.

"Your not looking to good. Why don't you take the rest of the day off. You did good kid." He slaps me on a he shoulder before leaving. I just stand there a moment, staring after him as my mind takes its time to catch up.

"... BOBBY!"

I don't even really remember leaving after that. I hear someone shouting up at me, straight ahead. I blink slowly and looking around as I notice I'm no longer in the tv station, in fact I'm almost to the police station. I'm standing in the middle of the street, the plate of cake still held in one hand, the other still wrapped but now soaked through and dripping blood.

"Bobby...?"

My head snaps forward towards the voice of concern and now as I focus I see who is talking. Bill Denbrough is standing beside his bike gripping the hands tightly as he stares at me with great concern if not the beginnings of fear.

I blink slowly before my mouth bobs like a fish breathing but finding no air on dry land.

"Bobby...you're crying... and you're bleeding. Are you okay?"

All I can manage is to close my mouth and shake my head slowly. I must look a mess and feel all the worse.

"Let's get you to Miss Linda."

I nod silently and follow beside him as he turns and continues the walk with me to the police station.

"I saw the show...I rushed out after to find you. I was worried after I saw the look you had on your face every time things grew quiet."



I nod acknowledging the horror that was running through my mind in those quiet moments.

"Then I saw you just waking in the street and you didn't stop. Not even after I said hi. Took a while to get you back. You where really out of it..."

I can tell Bill is looking for a way to ask and answer before he can struggle any further.

"Yes...H..He was...th...there..."

Bill doesn't look surprised, instead deep in thought at my words.

"I thought so...the kids kept calling you Pennywise."

His voice is quiet with deep concern laced through out it.

I nearly get sick right then and there. But instead we both just stop, Bill letting me catch my breath.

"I don't think it's a guess anymore that he's hiding away in you... every movement and sound...it was him but not at the same time."

I breath heavily, looking towards him in need to hear an explanation. Bill is quiet a moment longer, but not a moment do I sense fear.

Bill is calm as he stands there beside me, staring ahead before he speaks again.

"There was no hate in you... that's how I knew it wasn't really him in control. That it was you still." He turns to look at me, still quiet calm.

"I don't think any of the others say it. Any of my friends. They would have been at my house before the show was over." He sighed before looking at the ground, finding a rock to stare at.

"I'm not going to tell them for now. Fear will only make it worse. IT feeds off that and grows stronger. I know that you're not IT and I can trust you. You're in just as much deep shit as the rest of us now."

I can't help the chuckle that leaves me, I nod as he looks up at me,

and I smile sadly.

"That's a good way of putting it Bill."

He smiles at me, a genuine meaningful, caring smile. He's very much like Linda, I see that now. He cares and wants to help me and not damn me for what is happening that I have no power over.

"We should get that paint off your face before any of the guys see you though. It's way too spot on looking like IT's makeup now. Even that smeared."

I reach up to touch at my face as if that would tell me what I look like now. The image from before flashing to mind and reminding me why I'd ended up injured in the first place.

"Sort I'd found that out the hard way."

I blush waving my hand as I pull it from my face.

Bill looks worried but nods, "how exactly...?"

"Saw... m..my own re...reflection while in a hur...hurry to bolt. Turns out mirr...mirrors don't go down without a f..fight."

I smirk at making fun of it now.

"I can see that. I'll make sure not to pick a fight of my own with one."

Bill grins as we jokes back. We both start walking again, reaching the police station at a leisurely pace.

## 12. Chapter 12

"What's a sorry ass drunk clown like you doing in our parking lot?"

My eyes cautiously looked up from my messy auburn hair. An officer is asking such a question and so rudely? I'm at a loss of words. I doubt this man will believe anything I say by the looks of him. Even though I'm rather bad with names, faces I always recall, and this man I have never met before.

He looks at me as if I'm garbage to be tossed out in the street and washed away to be forgotten. His one hand grips tightly to his side arm as he uses his other to yank me up from my perch on the parking spot slab.

I'm suddenly wishing I hadn't agreed to wait here as Bill went into the police station to find Linda.

The mans grip is way too tight to be a friendly gesture of help. As soon as I'm steady on my feet he slaps the cake slice from my uninjured hand. I jump started by this violent reaction for me just sitting quietly.

"I asked you a question and you're to answer it clown. What are you doing here? If you don't answer I'll be forced to use other means to make your stick ass answer."

He reeks of cigarette smoke and spearmint mouthwash. His eyes are cold and lack any form of caring. In the pit of my stomach I can tell this is the sort of man that ends up turning out more a serial killer then a deputy of the law.

Is hiss escapes me as he applies my pressure to my arm, that hand is injured enough and I'm hoping I won't be adding broken arm to the mix as well.

"I'm waiting for a friend."

I'm hoping the answer would be enough to let him go, but instead I see his other hand move from his gun to his cuffs.

"Well why don't we wait inside in one of our luxury sweets for yours special friend and then I can book you both. You for intoxication and her for being a hoe."

Seeing things going farther south, I get ready to try and break free and run, but before I can put that into action I hear the voice of freedom arrive.

"What the hell are you doing Aubrey?"

I turned off see a angry, deep shade of red, Linda gawking at the officer holding my arm. Bill is behind her but off to the side, a look of worry and possibly horror over what is happening.

"I found this drunk pissing on the building. Said he's waiting for some hooker, so I was going to cuff him and catch the tart when she arrives."

All the worry I had flushed away now that I hear how stupid this man has screwed up. All because he judged as a bully without the facts.

A scoff slips free from my widening toothy grin. I feel, if not look like the Cheshire Cat of the tales of dear sweet Alice. Laughter irrups from deep with in me and claws free. It sounds crazed as I hear it, but I can not stop.

A vicious shakes quiets me to giggles but my grin never disappears.

"What's so funny to your drunk ass?"

I grin at him, all the more frightening with my make up as is, "I was waiting for said woman right there."

I point ever grinning at Linda.

I'd laugh all the harder at the look he gives now, but I'm already exhausted and in pain to enjoy it any longer. Linda carefully took my in-injured side and gently pried me free. Leading me to her cruiser before turning back toward this 'Aubrey.'

"Get your ass inside. I'll deal with you shortly."

Her eyes glare into him like daggers and I look closely for the cuts and blood to appear.

Sadly none appear and he slaps bus away inside.

"Bill can you stay with Bobby. I will be back shortly after I make sure that Officer is dealt with."

Her sweet smile is back in seconds as she asks this simple request of Bill.

He nods and agrees of course. A good kid to the core.

Linda disappears back I side before he turns his attention to me.

"What happened?"

I explain it all and he just looks all the more horrified, but I can tell it's not directed towards me.

"How can they hire such a guy to replace the last abusive asshole?"

Bill obviously sees my confusion as he explains to me about Henry Bowers and his late father.

"They some how even found Henry still alive after he fell down that well."

I look shocked I'm sure to hear this. Lasted I'd heard the bully Henry Bowers was dead. After hearing how he'd tried to kill Bill and his friends and all those others he did manage to kill under IT's spell. I wonder now what will happen and if all those murders of children blamed on him will change.

Bill must have guessed that would be my next question as he sighed and looked dead ahead, "they're still blaming him but no jail time I've heard. They're pleading insanity for what his dad did and putting him in an ward after he's out of hospital."

I can't help but sigh heavily myself at this news.

"At least he won't be out on the streets anymore to hurt you or your

friends again. Or anyone else for that matter."

"True..." Bill grins taking in my words and seeing the brighter side.

"The others don't know yet, but I'm sure they'll flip."

"I honestly can't blame them if they do Billy."

I'm staring ahead as well now but out of the corner of my eye I can see Bill flinch.

"Are you okay?" I feel worry build up, hoping he's alright.

I watch him now as he swallows before looking up at me, a look I'm not sure to call, but not quite fear.

"You called me Billy."

My one brow raises as if asking him verbally all the more why that matters.

"Only Georgie and...and IT ever called me that."

The realization hits and I can feel my face fall in reaction to his words. Horror and regret for saying his name such.

"I'm so sorry Bill, I won't do it again. If I knew...I'm...s...s...sorry."

I didn't expect what happened next, nor would have guessed it.

Bill turned and wrapped his arms around me, hugging me as I try to calm from this sudden startling movement. It takes me a very long and awkward time it feels to wrap my arms around him as well. All the more I feel awkward as I stroke his hair with my un-injured hand, though it oddly feels the right thing to do.

"It's alright Bobby... perhaps it will help me forget that thing ever said my name that way. Only Georgie would before and then that monster... I think I'd like someone to make it good again. I'd be happy if it would be you."

He pulled away slowly and I could tell from his eyes and my now

soggy shirt he had begun to cry while we hugged. I ignored it and just smiled. He needed to let this out and if I was to be the one to help then I would gladly.

"Alright. I'll take on the mantle to help you out...Billy."

Bill's own grin matched if not out grew my own.

He thanked me and hugged again only then to be caught by Linda as she came out to join us. Her own smile removing the look of anger and annoyance she once had.

"Let's take Bobby back to his place and patch him up, how bout it?"

## 13. Chapter 13

"Hohohoho! Hello boys and girls! Who's having a wonderful Easter Here in Derry?"

Dozens of children and adults wave and cheer. Smiles and laughter abound the large group of hundreds celebrating their Easter Sunday with the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. All are dressed in their finest wears. A perfect scene of happiness set in a Victorian Derry setting.

Clapping of gloves hands can be heard accompanied by the sound of jingling bells. A bright white face painted with vivid red grins with huge buck teeth at the crowd.

"Good good good! I'm Pennywise the Dancing Clown and I'm here to help start off your special holiday event! Are you all ready?"

The clown places his hand to his ear as if hard of hearing as the crowd cheers.

"What was that? I think I have something in my ears." With a what appears slight of hand, Pennywise pulls scarves from one ear and then the other. Pulling them back and forth as if cleaning the space in between before pulling the tied scarves fully from one side.

"That's better. Now again, are you ready?" He shouts with a grin and a clap. Children and adults alike cheer all the louder. Pennywise raising his own hands in loud cheer.

"Then I officially announce that the 1903 Derry Egg Hunt has begun!" He hoots and howlers, jumping up into the air, cannons on his stage shooting confetti everywhere into the crowd.

Children giggle as they dash off with their baskets to find every hidden and colorful egg. A grand prize to be given by the Pennywise himself.

Pennywise grins, cheering and hopping about, following the crowd of children. Appear in different places as he cheers them on.

Everyone is having great fun. All focus on the event at hand. No one



is left to keep a close eye over the little things about town. Not as if it is needed. Nothing could ever happen on such a joyous and celebratory day.

Oh if the boilers of Derry's great Iron Works would listen, they'd know that as well today. The children and adults scattered about the yard would be in no danger at all. But the boilers have a mind of their own on this day.

No one hears or reads the growing pressure. The gauge rising steadily as it reads higher and higher. Steam trying to find freedom, only to scream as it squeezes through the seams. If only one person was there to watch as the needle hits an outrageously high number that would not ever read as normal, then perhaps they could stop what will come. Perhaps they could even warn the crowds. Evacuate the innocents that are too close to the building now.

The boilers strain and bulge against the pressure, but it is no use. With in moments it will be too late to stop it.

A young boy finds a most colorful egg he has seen as of yet. The rest of his arms filled already. He smiles at the small girl who watches him sadly. She has found none of her own so far. The young boy hands the egg to her, his smile never leaving as the small girl smiles back and takes the egg ever so gently. With in moments though her smile is gone and so is the young boys head.

The pressure has become too great and a piece has blown free, relieving the boy of his much needed head. His body falls to the ground with a thunk before the girl can even finish screaming. His head will not be found until later. High in the tree branches not too far away.

Adults and children alike turn to see what the scream is about. Little time is given to investigate what has happened and caused this tragedy. Another piece of breaks free and flies at high speeds through the air. No one is hit this time, but this piece is soon joined by another and another. Now there is no more time to run to safety.

The explosion is felt and seen before heard. The boilers give and take the building all those around it with it. Screams fill the air, but no

one there can truly hear them. All have fallen deaf for the time from the loud boom and concussion of the blast. All have been lain flat upon the ground. Not a single person was left standing. Those lucky to survive are half and half of those will not make it to the end of this day.

The list of injuries grow as the blood flows and covers the grounds around them. Injured and none alike are covered in a mix of blood, soot, and human parts of all kinds. Children cry for their parents that now lay dead as parents cry for their dead children. A few single parents are left to see what is left of their spouse and child.

The out cry is great and all are in a panic. The air is heavy with burnt flesh and fresh drain blood.

Pennywise dances no more.

Staring out into the crowd, unharmed from his distance upon his beloved circus wagon's stage. Horror upon his face, wide eyes taking all of it in.

His joy is gone. Taken from the horrors at hand.

'Oh so delish. So wonderfully tasty and fresh. I think I shall enjoy myself. It is but a bit early for me to wake, but oh, how can I resist such a lovely treat.'

The clowns face grows blank. Eyes moving to either side, a look of vacancy upon it.

'Do not worry, I shan't take long. Sleep and forget. No need to remember such an event as this. Dream of happy things and soon you'll wake to such wonderful things...'

Pennywise began to grin a savage shark tooth liked grin. Turning to staring behind him, drool rolling free and bright red eyes glowing bright.

"Just sleep Bobby. Let me take the wheel." The mad clown reaches out with claws, ready to snatch away who is watching.

I nearly scream as I gasp awake. Gripping my seat, my head whips

around, searching for the scene that had been before me.

"Bobby, you okay? Bad dream?" Linda sits in the drivers seat, driving calmly as one can after everything that's happened today.

I look behind us to see Bill's bike, a crapped Bill beside me. I hadn't even noticed him beside me in my reaction to such a horrifying nightmare. He looks deeply worried as he reaching out to touch my arm. I suddenly feel more grounded. This is reality and all I had just seen was but a dream. It wasn't real. None of it.

"Y.. yeah. N..n..nightmare."

They both nod but still look worried.

"I'll b..be fine."

How can I lie so easily?

I won't be fine if this keeps up.

'It was real Bobby Boy.' A chuckle follows as I go ridged.

'Ask Eggboy some time.'

## 14. Chapter 14

The rest of the ride was eerily silent for the three of us. I could feel Bill's eyes on me, trying his best to hide his concern when I settled back in my seat.

The poor boy, I still can't imagine how, was wedged in the back of the police cruiser along with his bike. His long arms and legs weaving about it as he held it close. The back bore more room than expected, perhaps to house any size of criminal arrested and transported to their final destination.

They had tried the trunk, but it was too narrow and the handle bars too wide. I had even offered to sit in the back with it instead of Bill, but both protested due to my injured hand. I had forgotten all about it after the run in with Officer "Dick" Aubrey.

That man oozed trouble and it wouldn't be long before his shit began to stick around him. Stinking up the place and the whole town for that matter. A feeling that gnawed at me as I remembered the encounter.

Thankfully Linda looked calmest of us three. Her sights on the road ahead and no sneaking peeks at me. Aubrey must have upset her a great deal to not be worrying over me nightmare or asking any questions about my make up.

"Officer Linda, where exactly are you taking us?" Bill finally piped up from the back.

"You mentioned Bobby's, but I've bikes in this area many times, I've never seen him out here. If anything we're headed towards the old Neibolt house. No one even lives there, at least nothing human."

I can't help looking over my shoulder confused before looking to Linda and back.

"What do you mean? That block is filled with people. Not a single house stands on my street empty." I smile cheerfully as I remember my neighborhood.

"In fact the house I live in has been in the family for generations. The first Robert Gray made a fortune with his brewing company and used the wealth to buy the land to build a home perfect of the times. Supposedly it was cheaper due to an old dried up well on the property. The house was built over it and the yard filled with beautiful sunflowers."

Why did it feel lost or I had just read the lines of a brochure or all the more feeling a script?

"You've never told me that..." Linda looks like I've pulled a rug out from under her.

"You've always said you don't remember things about your family. And when did you become the descendant to a rich beer brewer? I've seen that beer. I thought it just coincidence you'd have the same name as the famous Derry brew."

"I've seen that beer. It never clicked they were the same name. I've always seen dad drink it. Actually I think it's the only brand I see the adults drink around here." Bill mentions off hand. As if he's noticed something odd about what he'd just said.

We can't help but look at each other and I can tell we are both bothered and worried by the oddness of this sudden family info on both our ends.

"I never drink the stuff." Linda piped up. "I hate beer. More a wine girl. I don't think I've ever had a drop of any of that Robert Gray sludge. Sniffed it once and it was like sewer water poured into a bottle." She stuck her tongue out to make sure just how much she hated the stuff.

We would have dwelled on it more if Linda wasn't pulling into my driveway.

As I pulled my attention back to my surroundings my face fell as all the more confusion hit. The houses around my home were farther then ever. In fact it was like there had never been any homes right next to my own.

I'm not alone as both Linda and Bill stare. Linda double taking as she looked on either side of my home, but it's Bill that brings a chill up my spine.

"You live in IT's house?"

I turn to stare at him and see just how uncomfortable and startled he is. I've not seen him ever this unnerved.

"What? No, it can't be. I would have noticed an Evil Clown in my home."

"Last time I was here this place was all empty and run down. It's the Crackhead House of Derry. IT uses it to scare anyone that paces this place. There's an eroding old well in the basement that leads to the sewers and IT's den. We found all the missing children down there. Henry Bowers tried to kill Mike in that basement before falling down the well."

I can't stop myself looking to Linda to say this was just crazy. That it couldn't be right. But she's glaring at the house. When I try to see what she is I now see that mom own home is no longer bright and happy. The exterior is dark and foreboding. The color is gone and the walls are peeling. The trees outside are bare of life and my heart breaks as my mouth drops.

"N... ...this...this isnt r..rrrrright!" I quickly close my eyes tight, using my hands to block out the sight all the more. This wasn't my lovely home. This wasn't where I'd been living happily for so long.

"We're leaving." Linda states before sliding into reverse and backing out and away quickly.

I don't dare peek out. My world is swirling and dizzying. My reality is crumbling and all my solid footing is breaking and falling away from underneath me.

I'm thankful that neither of them try to talk to me. I'm breathing raggedly, trying hard to not get ill or pass out.

"We're are we going?"

"We're heading to my house Bill. I'm not letting either of you set foot in that house. Especially Bobby. No wonder that bastard has its hooks into him. That piece of shit has been looming over him this whole time! The sooner he's away from there the better. Bobby will stay at my place from here on out. That's it. No discussion."

Bill fell silent after that.

He wasn't against this plan and neither was I.

Linda was my last solid foot hold to sanity and right now I needed her the most. Her word was law and I wasn't about to break it.

Even Bill was becoming one as well. His calm at my worst moments solidifying the hand grips to this rocky cliff.

Even now he was just a boy compared to me. I was no longer a teenager, but an adult, yet I couldn't handle it all.

My breathing began to even out as I took long deep breaths before letting them out slowly. My eyes were still shut tight, though my hands now clenched the seat belt around me tightly. I tugged it tight as I could, a feeling of security, holding it in place so it wouldn't loosen or let me go. Keeping me grounded, my mind only on how the seat and the seatbelt felt.

Linda had pointed the AC at me on a nice leave that helped keep me cool. The heat outside would only have made it all the worse for me. Discomfort and agitation brought on by the heat would only send me deeper into myself. I was thankfully for Linda knowing without a word and I made a note to thank her later.

"Bill, I want you to help me with Bobby."

I could feel the car slowing before she stopped, parking before turning the engine off.

"We're going to help him to my couch and then get him an ice cold water. I'll help you with your bike after that. Bobby, you can try and relax when we get you situated. Let Bill and myself handle things for a while."

I nodded mutely at Linda's words.

I still didn't want to let the seatbelt go, but a new grounding where I could lay down sounded nice.

Once my door opened and I felt Linda touch my shoulder lightly, I let my security go. I could feel her reach across and free me before gently guiding me out of my seat.

Another pair of hands joined hers and I knew Bill was doing as requested.

I hated it, but had to chance peeking to watch my step. Barely open, I made sure my feet didn't hit anything. Once they helped me to my new seat I closed my eyes tight once more. Linda guided my head down to a pillow before carefully placing a blanket over me.

"You just rest Bobby. Thanks Bill. Bobby there's a glass of cold water next to your head on the side table. If you get thirsty it's there for you."

I nodded weakly so she knew I'd heard and understood.

Shortly after I heard two sets of footsteps leading away before a door closing and silence following.

With a shaky breath I tried to relax, no longer focus on what was around me and just try and drift to sleep.

It must have worked because the next thing I could make out was the bright light of the kitchen and the darkness around me everywhere else.



## 15. Chapter 15

It felt like it took my all to sight up, let alone stand from the couch. I felt drained even from all that time asleep and as if I was coming down ill. The room felt tilted as I weaved my way to the kitchen where I now made out Linda. A cup of something hot in front of her, steaming away as she flipped through papers laid to the side of her mug.

As soon as she noticed my entry into the light of the kitchen she closed the file of said papers. Looking up with a tired if not worryingly sad smile.

I tried to find a label on the folder, but it was blank. I frowned looking up at Linda to see tears forming in her eyes.

Before the words could leave my mouth she spoke.

"How's the hand?"

I was a bit confused, but then the morning came flooding back. I stared down as I lifted my injured hand to inspect it, only to find it wrapped in gauze.

"After Bill helped me get you in and you'd fallen asleep I got to work cleaning and treating it."

She took my hand gently to look it over. Peeking at it without me getting a look at the damage.

"It doesn't hurt anymore..." I said honestly. It didn't feel like I had ever even I injured it.

A look came over her face before she let my hand go.

"Leave that on until I tell you otherwise."

I agreed with a sigh as I watched Linda stand and pour me the same hot liquid drive no as her own.

"Hot coco." She grinned placing it in front of me before taking her

seat again.

With the sound of the chairs legs scrapping the floor, I pulled a chair free to sit with her, sipping my drink carefully to make sure it wasn't too hot. The last thing I needed was to burn my tongue.

Thankfully it was cool enough to enjoy without further injury to myself. Sipping away I continued to eye the folder she now had her arm on top of.

"Where's Billy?" It was dark, obviously night, but for how long and was he still here?

"He went home shortly before the sunset. Said he didn't want his parents worrying after what happened with Georgie."

My chest tightened hearing what I should have already guessed and why. Hearing about Georgie was still a new wound and stung with the reminder.

"That makes sense. Smart boy."

I stare at my mug , a feeling of unease coming stronger over me.

"Linda, what where you looking at before I woke up?"

When I look up to hear her answer there is a very torn look greeting me on her face.

A look of unwilling to share some dark secret. Linda looks away quickly as she fidgets with the folder. Evening papers inside that were sticking out.

"Nothing, just papers from school since I moved her. Some pictures and such. I told you I was going to look into the school history and did. Nothing to worry your little head over Bobby."

Her smile doesn't reach her eyes. A hollow joy with pain behind its surface.

"Linda..."

Her eyes snap to my own as if a magnet has activated. She won't look away now, no matter how hard she is trying.

"Bobby, please..."

Her voice breaks as she pleads.

How bad could it be to have her resist this hard. I can see the tears forming as I keep eye contact. I'm not about to break. Not this time.

A sob escapes her as she finally gives in, pushing the folder over to me.

As I break my eye contact to look inside. I slowly flip the cover to look at the first page. It's nothing unusual. Linda's form filled out by her parents to start school here in Derry.

I look up at Linda and she says nothing, only urges me to keep going.

I flip the page over to see her school photo. Flip again, class photo appears. Again and it is a random in class photo. I don't see it at first. It's very small to catch, but as I continue to look through the photos of the class and through out the year with Linda I spot what's off.

The worry had always been I hadn't been in school with her, oh but the contrary, I was there in everyone. Even her alone photo I could find a reflection off her old glasses.

But that's not the part that was causing me sudden alarm. No, that wasn't causing the panic rising in my chest.

I always pictured us the same age. Though I times I felt I was the younger of us too. But if these where real, I was the elder and some how never changing of us.

I shoved the folder away as if it was burning my flesh.

The last image of Linda smiling in grade school with myself holding her hand and grinning no older then I was now.

"What the f..."

My eyes feel like they are going to pop out of my head as I stare wide eyed and confused at Linda.

"The...they got to be fake...you're messing with me aren't you Lin? This isn't funny!" I snap, shoving my chair back with full force in my anger with my hands on the table. But it's not my chair that moves. The table screeches pushing forward and past Linda and straight into the back kitchen door. The mugs and paper fly about as the table hits the wall with a deafening crack. The wall is sentenced and the table looks all the worse as it gives from the force crumpling in half.

I'm speechless as I stay frozen in mid movement after. I look of startled horror on my face and one of worry on Linda's. No fear. I can't find it, I don't see or smell it from her as I turn slowly to look at her.

My mouth still hangs open as I try to take in what just happened.

"Lin...wh...what's ...wrong with ..m...me?" My whole body is shaking as I ask what I know she can't possibly answer.

That doesn't stop her from trying.

She leaps up, wrapping her arms tight around me, shushing and soothing me as she always has. Not like I've just done something violent and out of my control.

"Shhh, Bobby, shhh. It's going to be alright. I didn't want you to know cause of this. Neither of us did."

I hold to her, my eyes closing tight as it becomes clear, not only does Linda know about these papers but Bill as well.

"He knows...?" I know the answer but I ask all the same.

"Yes... He was the one to point it out to me. I found photos my parents took as well... they're the same... it's all real Bobby. Until now I never noticed. My parents never noticed. Until Bill said something I didn't see..." She speaks so soothingly as she strokes my hair gently, rubbing my back in circles.

"We both agreed not to say anything to the others or anyone else

until we find out and understand what this all means. I'm not going to let anyone hurt you Bobby. Bill is worried just as much as myself. He really cares about you Bobby. He said I only should tell you if I had too... he didn't want you anymore upset and afraid as you were already."

I could feel her lips on my forehead, kissing me softly before pulling me close.

"I love you Bobby. You're the brother I never had and no matter what that will never change. We'll fix this. We'll find out what It did to you and break it."

I could hear the manic laughter deep in the back of my mind as she said this. My gut turning as I heard IT.

'Boy do I know how to pick them... Say Bobby, think she'll still love us when she finds out I'm here?'

My body tenses at IT's words. My breath hitching as I listen to it speak, mocking me.

'Oh Bobby boy, did you think you've been alone all this time? I've been here the whole time. What you see, I see. What you hear, I hear. No, you wouldn't remember, I make sure of that... but this time... you can thank your little friends for making that not possible. Enjoy your memories for now Bobby. Perhaps I may share all the more in time."

## 16. Chapter 16

After my out burst I found it hard to face Linda. I couldn't forget what I had seen and erase what I now knew. That monster was doing this to me. He was the cause of all the pain I'd been living through and some how I forgot that IT was even doing this.

Linda didn't follow me as I returned to lay down on the couch. I could hear her moving the table and chairs back while picking up the papers that had flown about upon the impact of table and wall. She didn't say a word as it became silent, not one as I heard her walk towards where I lay. I was faced away in shame and fear of my own self, unable to look at her and see the same fear come back two times worse if not more.

I didn't expect though to feel her sit behind me and pull me up into a tight hug. My eyes snapping open with confusion and lack of any understanding why she would be doing this. But then I heard it, the once muffled sounds of sobbing, now out in the open air. I had been crying and I hadn't even registered it. Linda was trying to comfort me.

I looked at her with fear, but she looked at me with worry and pity. She held me as if I was but a child in need of a parents loving touch and comfort. Rocking softly as she hummed and stroked my hair softly, in a slow calming fashion.

I didn't fight it. I embraced it fully. Closing my eyes and letting her soothe me as if I was but a babe crying out in fear for it's mother's warmth and love. She was filling the void no one else could ever do.

I have no memory of when I feel asleep. Just the way I woke to a glaring sun shinning too brightly for such a horrible mood I was in. My eyes and head ached from the emotions of the previous night. I prayed it was only a nightmare. None of it had happened, but I was never so lucky.

I turned to look toward the kitchen and there plan as day were the marks I had left on the wall and table. What I didn't expect to see was Bill seated and smiling at me. An array of foods placed put on the

table, which I admit was sturdier the. I would have given it credit a day ago.

Linda soon came into view as she placed another dish out. Bill pointing with a nod and a word to her that I was awake finally. It was all the more eerie for me that I could hear this all from my place on the couch.

She came to greet me with a smile, but I couldn't face her or Bill as I laid back down facing away once more.

"No you don't! You are not allowed to mop around here after what happened yesterday! Get your ass up and have breakfast with us or so help me I will dump ice water all over you."

Linda's threat didn't spur me. Only made me curl all the more into myself, pulling the blanket around me tighter.

I heard footsteps leaving me and sighed relieved, but for a moment. They returned shortly along with a sudden shock of wet and cold.

I screamed startled, leaping from the couch, most likely looking like a very displeased wet cat.

I glared with all my might at Linda, but it didn't phase her as she grinned at me in a proud of herself fashion.

"I did warn you Bobby." She snorted, walking back into the kitchen with her finger swinging a fairly large bucket by its handle.

"She has it ready and waiting while she made breakfast. Sorry I didn't warn you Bobby. She threatened me with not allowing me to eat her cooking. I couldn't risk it."

I sighed heavily, but nodded, my mood lightening a bit. "No harm Billy. I know her ways of bribery too well. She'd have kept her promise and then ate it in front of you while making obnoxious happy noises."

"I would not have!"

"You would too have! You've done it to me you liar!"

Linda merely grinned knowing too well I was right but at the same time had made me forget about why I was in such a bad mood.

Groaning I pulled my freezing soaked shirt free. Luckily, or if not planned, she had only gotten the top of me drenched. My hair was soggy as I pushed it from my eyes. Frowning as Linda continued to grin at me as she tossed a fresh shirt to me.

"You really did plan this all out didn't you?"

She only smiled all the more as I slipped the right fitting shirt over my head and sat down to eat. It wasn't until I heard Bill's laughter and him staring at my chest that I caught on that it was one of hers.

"BARBIE? Really Lin?" I glare as she begins to join along with Bill in his laughter.

Rubbing my face I sigh as I give up and join in with only a single chuckle.

I'm still warn and weary, but their laughter lifts my spirits. Letting myself relax into my seat as Little bds comes to sit with us with her last dish.

"Alright boys, dig in."

I sluggishly begin to fill my plate as the others do the same. Though I can see a questioning look on Billy's face.

"Miss Linda, you cooked an awful lot, this is more then what my mother makes for our family. I'd feel bad if it goes to waste account of you making it all for us."

Linda smiled assuredly at him as I stuck a while cinnamon roll into my mouth.

"Bill, you don't worry about that. In fact I tried to make only a bit more then usual."

He looked confused by this before looking at me. Linda's thumb pointing in my direction I could see as why he would be.



With a roll still in my mouth and one in a free hand with my other holding a fork currently cutting a pancake in half, I looked equally perplexed until she spoke once more.

"As you can see Bobby here doesn't actually know how much more he eats then the average human being. I make double the amount for him before even making anything for myself."

I nearly choked when I tried to protest, swallowing the roll in my mouth completely whole.

"What!? Linda you should've told me. It's not right I eat before you nor the fact out of house and home."

Instead of protesting back, she and Bill alike looked at me as if I'd grown a second head.

"W...wh...What?"

"Bobby...did you just swallow that cinnamon roll whole?"

It took me a moment as I nodded to catch on to why they looked so startled.

I looked at the one in my hand realizing it was nearly twice the size of it if not more. Looking at the other rolls as well they were as large if not give or take larger.

I dropped my fork and roll in horror before scooting my chair back and away from the table. This time minding the force I used to do so.

"Bobby, are you alright. You can breath fine, yes?"

Linda was already up and hovering around me, making sure I wasn't about to officiate right then and there.

"Bobby..."

My eyes shot up to meet Billy's full of concern, on my behalf?

"Are you okay? That was a pretty impressive trick if you are."

His smile was bright as he watched me.

How could he be so calm and look so happy when he should be afraid of me as much as I am if myself at this moment.

"Why aren't you scared?"

I could feel the tears of my own worries and fears build as I asked finally out loud to them both.

"That monster is inside me... he has to be... or he's using me... yet neither of you are afraid. How? I can't even be strong for myself. My world is crumbling around me. I hear IT mock me...threaten to harm you both...I'm so scared..." the dam breaks releasing my tears once more. "I'm not just afraid for me...I'm scared I'll harm you both in the end."

"Bobby, you won't hurt either of us."

Linda so confident as she tries to reach to wipe the tears away, only to have me flinch away quickly.

"No! We don't know that! You both are better off if I just off myself. Maybe head first into a wood chipper so I don't chicken out."

Linda looks horrified by my words, screeching a no as she tries to grab hold of me. It's Billy though who is the most calm of us. He looks at me with deep concern and sadness as he finally speaks his mind on what I've just suggested.

"I don't think it would work even if you tried, though I'd prefer you didn't try it any way Bobby."

Linda stops trying to grab me as we both watch him confused by his words, though Linda looks relieved that Bill doesn't want me to try and kill myself either.

"If IT is hiding in you... then I doubt you would die. We couldn't properly kill IT before and I don't believe something as simple as a wood chipper would do it either. He'd probably even stop you before you could test it out." I now notice even Billy has begun to cry, as well as Linda.

"Bobby, don't do anything stupid...I lost my brother already and I can't lose anyone else. Especially my newest friend. So please, no matter what, don't do anything dumb and talk to us. Let us know what is happening. We'll figure this out together and when we do we'll kill IT and save you in the process. Okay?"

How could I have let all my fears blind me to how others cared about me? I let my fear blind me and pull me far from those I loved and cared about. My friends...no, more than that. They were the family I couldn't remember ever having.

"I promise...I..I w..won't do anything s..stupid."

## 17. Chapter 17

Linda sighed heavily before taking a deep breath, calming herself best she could as I continued to try and stop being so emotional. I'd had more stress then I could ever remember and at this point I'm sure I'd remember that much gut wrenching weight of emotions. Though the clown seemed to have proven this far that IT could vanish such memories and make a grown man seem not out of place with a small girl at her school.

What came next must have been from Linda knowing the same thing.

"Bobby, you're going to stay with Bill today. I have work and need to return the files I borrowed. Though I am going to make sure to get copies. I won't have time with my actual police work as well as my side investigating to keep an eye on you. Don't even get me started on the new guy. That asshole is already got me wanting to unload my firearm into him and I can't risk you running into him again and possibly getting hurt. So Billy has agreed with me that you'll ghost him today. Before you try and complain, we both figured no one will notice cause of the damn clown and his freaking mind tricks. Even so, try and behave."

She was practically begging me as she went back to dishing her food. I gave a weak nod before pushing my own food around before trying to eat again. More daintily, which had both Billy and her staring.

"Bobby, you don't have to change your habits now. Believe me when I say I don't mind and only see you even when you swallow a freaking roll log." Billy grinned as he reassured me, "If it bugged me do you think I'd be agreeing with Miss Linda that you and I should hang out all day with my friends? You're not that monster no matter how many traits you have cause of IT. You're Bobby Gray and that will always be who I see. A caring person and friend. IT can't say the same, now can IT?"

He had a point that I couldn't or more like wasn't willing to try and counter. I nodded again before wriggling my nose in thought before picking up three rolls. Both Billy and Linda looked confused as I stared at them, but went into full panic mod as soon as they saw me

putting them into my mouth.

Billy was almost half way cross the table as Linda ran to my side ready to give me a good smack to the back. But no chocking came as I swallowed them and grinned.

Billy looked relieved, but Linda looked ready to choke me herself.

"You utter ass! What the hell!"

"Th..that was...h..hilarious!" Billy wheezed through his fit of laughter.

"What else can you do that with?"

"NO!" Linda shrieked pulling the rolls away quickly. "No more! I will not have this turn into a freak show and end up having you reach a limit and choke out in my kitchen mister! Get your ass cleaned up and dressed and out of this house before I regret allowing you and Bill to hang out and possibly cause more mischief."

Billy was now trying to stifle his laughter as I continued to grin. Though I was about to question about clothing when Linda answered without me asking.

"I grabbed some extra clothing for you while back before this whole thing started. I never know if you need the help or not and so thought it wise to have back up and so here we are and I was right. Now move it!"

She nearly swatted me with a spatula, though all in good fun. I ran off to her bathroom to do as told before easily finding the clothing she spoke off. With ease they were on and I was dashing down the stairs to join them once more. My mood lifted for the time. A spitting image of a child waking on Christmas Day to eagerly open ones gifts placed under the tree.

I nearly skid to a crash as I turned to head towards the kitchen. Landing on all fours before easily hopping up in a pounce as my balance returned. An unheard of feat for one as clumsy as myself. I hadn't even broke a sweat. No need for a rest for air either as I grinned wildly at the two standing in the kitchen.

"That has to be a record!" Bill awed as he headed out towards the front door. We may even be early to see the guys at this rate. I rode Silver here..."

"I made sure Bobby's own bike was ready for when he got up." Linda pipped up with a proud grin. "Helmet and all. So you two ride carefully and stay out of the trouble. Pull out of the way of cars and bike on the opposite so cars can see you coming and avoid you."

"Yes ma'am," Bill said quickly as I sighed heavily with my own, "Yes Mom."

"None of that snark mister and thank you Billy." Linda looked so relieved before coming over and pulling me into a tight hug. Speaking softly in my ear as I reluctantly returned the hug.

"No matter what Bobby, I love you."

She had said such things before but this time it took my breath away. Frozen in place as she peaked a kiss on my cheek before grinning at me with watery eyes.

I could feel the look of confusion on my face turn to one similar to her own. "I love you too Linda. No matter what." I gave her a peak before grinning devilishly and changing it to a full lick up her cheek.

She shrieked in disgust as not only myself, but Bill as we'll burst into laughter. I ran through the front door laughing as I try to avoid her fake fury as she tossed insults and swinging fists.

But a smile remained as Billy and I peddled away.

A terrible gnawing feeling began to grow in me as I smiled back and waved as she became but a distant spot. A feeling that what I'd been through so far would be nothing compared to what I would face and feel next.

## 18. Chapter 18

"FINALLY! What took you so long Bill?" Richie shouted as he saw Bill turning down the the rock road to where the rest of the Loser's gathered. Bikes tossed aside, a couple actually using their stands.

I was still a bit behind Bill when I heard the shout. Just trying to relax and enjoy the ride, but that all disappeared when I heard the sounds of surprises and startled comments that I shouldn't have been able to hear that far away as I made the turn after Bill.

"You brought HIM with you? What the hell Bill?" Richie wasn't even to try and keep his voice down as he made his opinion known to Bill. Screaming in protest as he walked forward to greet and shout at Bill for bringing me along.

"That thing is after his ass, and you brought him here? We just got out of that mess and you're bringing our asses right back into that mess again. GAH! What are you thinking Bill!"

"Richie stop! Bobby needs help and we are the only ones that know anything that could help him. So stop... stop your bitching and accept that he's here."

Richie wasn't the only one staring shocked at Bill standing up for me so strongly. All the other Losers and myself were in awe, staring mouths a gap. When I found my words I had a growing feeling of guilt. I didn't want to tear these friends apart. They had survived something so horrible, that I was barely surviving it at this moment.

"Billy..."

"No Bobby, no, Richie should no better. After everything we've gone through, he should know that we need to help everyone IT goes after and tortures. We tried to help the other kids... this time we can stop IT and help you."

The others looked not too sure, though Beverly was giving Bill a proud look for his brave words and actions.

I shallowed hard as I stood there, straddling my bike, unsure how to get past this awkward moment we had now fallen into. The silence was deafening until to my surprise Eddie spoke up.

"As long as he doesn't do anything freaky shit... I guess it's okay... But if he starts pulling balloons out his ass he's leaving. You got that?"

I merely nodded quickly. It was a fair trade and I didn't know nor planned on pulling any trick like that. Though it made me wonder what things this IT had done to the point that Eddie would even suggest that as something I would do. I just shook it off as I waited then, watching as the others either sighed and then accepted what was going on. Or accepted it understandingly as Beverly now did.

"So... what do we do now. We can't really go around with him. That's strange having a strange guy following us. People will talk and Eddie's mom is already crazy, we don't need to add her thinking he's doing shit." Richie gestured towards me grumbling before crossing his arms. He must have had big plans to be this upset with me just tagging along for the ride.

"Actually we don't need to worry about that. Side effect to IT messing with Bobby." Bill said softly, "Turns out he doesn't really... get noticed."

They looked at me confused but this new information. All the more making me fell awkward under their stares. All trying to see what it was that kept me so hidden and unnoticed by the town's population.

"It's ...t..true." I confirmed, hoping that would be enough and get them to stop staring.

"Prove it." Richie piped up. "Steal something, run through the streets in your underwear, go set fire to the Bowser's house...."

"Richie, stop it." Stanley spoke up, "There always comes a point when you go too far. I take his word for it... after all we've been through and seen, it's not hard to believe."

Stanley never really looks my way, or makes eye contact with me. I can tell he didn't do that for me, but instead for Bill.



This kid has a good group of friends and I feel I'm ever closer to destroying that bond by the second.

"Thanks Stan. Now, if we're done with this pointless arguing, let's get going. They have new films in town and seeing we now have an adult..."

Billy gestures to me, but I don't catch on right away. Even as the rest of the group grins and cheers at whatever Bill is thinking.

"W... d.d..does t..that mean?" I lean over to him and quietly ask.

Bill grins as he pats me on the back assuringly.

"It means a sure fire way to win theses guys over. You see we're not old enough yet to see the R rated films the show and a few of us aren't allowed to see it even with a parent to buy the tickets."

"Eddie's mom ruins it all." Richie barks grumpily.

"She says no for Eddie and then tries to tell our parents their horrible for letting us. Then it we lose another person and then what's even the point of seeing the movie without everyone?" He tosses his arms up in frustration as his voice goes up an octave into a shout.

"Which..." Billy pulls back control over the conversation, "is why we would like you to buy tickets for our group to see a movie and even join us as supervisor. Though really you'll be just part of the group in the end. We'll give you the money and you use it for the tickets. Miss Linda already knows and gave me some cash for us all to get popcorn, drinks and a bunch of snacks."

"For a cop, she's not really good at preventing us from breaking the law." Eddie mumbled from beside Richie.

"Technically we won't be breaking rules since Bobby will be there with us and he'll be buying the tickets." Beverly spoke up with a matching grin to Billy's.

"And it doesn't exactly have to be a parent or guardian. He won't be just buying the tickets and leaving either, so all in all she doesn't have to get onto us."

"But mom said..."

"I...I've n..never...s...spoken ..to...to your m...mother Eddie." I grin now in on the plan.

Eddie looked ready to protest before I added, "I..I w..won't t..tell." Giving my best smile and a wink.

He looked for a moment perplexed. A sudden uncertain stare as if he was experiencing deja vu, but what looked about to be horror disappeared as he shook his head and sighed.

"Fine, but if she finds out I'm dead." Eddie gave in, looking almost like his head might explode.

"Dad would just make me do something around the temple." Stanley mumbled, "it's worth the chance." He smirked slowly as he agreed with the plan.

With all in agreement, the band of friends took off with Billy leading. I tagged a bit behind, not wanting to impose any more then I was. Nor did I wish to make them feel crowded by my presence.

The whole ride to the theater was rather pleasant. The breeze as we flew down the road was refreshing. The view enjoyable with the leaves starting to look unsure of what color they should be. Soon it would be autumn and they would choose colors other then green.

The group chatted and bantered all the way, but I barely listened in. I had no say in what they talked about. They were finally able to be kids. No more thoughts of monsters or fellow friends in danger. For this moment they were teenagers enjoying themselves.

Everyone was parked and waiting by the ticket booth as I came to a stop, hopping a bit awkwardly off my bike with my lengthy legs. Removing my helmet and placing it on the seat of my bike for keeping. I didn't expect the looks as I smiled walking over to join them at the booth.

It was a mix of some odd mix of wishing to laugh and wanting to be afraid.

I look to Bill who only looks startled as he comes over, starting to lick his hands and rub at my head.

"W..what? Eww.." I wrinkle my nose in disgust.

"Your hair is sticking up and it's too much like IT's." Billy hissed in my ear calmly. "They're noticing. I got to fix it."

That's what it was. IT was slipping through the cracks and the other kids couldn't figure out why I was unsettling them.

I tried to help, but as soon as I licked my own hand and rubbed. Finally getting it down and holding.

Billy sighed and nodded once my helmet hair was fixed.

The others seemed a moment to register and then blink it all away. As if it had never happened.

I couldn't help but look worried to Bill.

"If they were in immediate danger I'd be worried about their forgetfulness, but right now I rather it just be you, Miss Linda and myself alone that knows. This once let IT's tricks work and ease their minds."

I wanted to say how wrong that felt. To allow them to just forget, or not perceive as much as Bill was, but then I remembered it had barely been a couple of days since they had all fought that monster. They deserved to forget and enjoy themselves now that IT wasn't after them anymore.

"What about you though Billy? You deserve peace of mind and to forget what has happened too. Why haven't you?"

He looked somber as he thought what I had said over. His reply breaking my heart.

"I can't forget...IT took Georgie from me. It took my happy family away. The others didn't lose someone they love. Nor do they now go home to a mother that no longer looks at them. Who each days fades away, mourning her younger son. A father that rather ignore what happened and give up all hope when they try so hard to keep it and find that brother that have lost. All because they gave in and made a stupid wax boat. Didn't join him to play with it cause they weren't

feeling well. Could have prevented his death if only they had gone with him..."

Bill is visibly shaking with the emotion in his voice. Tears threaten to spill as he chokes back a sob. Trying to be strong and not let his friend see him ducks his head, facing me so his back is to the group. I can see the wet spots form on his shirt as tears escape his will.

I look over his shoulder to see the group now in a deep conversation among themselves, taking this moment of distraction to do my best to help Bill. Reaching out unsure, placing my hand on his shoulder. I can feel his whole shake with each sob he tries not to let out and be heard.

I know what to do then, pulling him close into a tight hug.

"Shhh...don't you dare blame yourself Billy. Don't you ever dare. You weren't responsible for anything that happened to Georgie. Not a thing. You were sick in bed. Your parents should have been watching him. What were they doing?"

He takes a moment to get a deep breath in, "mother was playing piano..."

"What of your father?" I coax him gently for an answer.

"He...he wasn't there..." he sniffed, burying his head into my shoulder.

"Parents are to protect their children. Keep a watchful eye upon them. They failed to do their job Billy, not you." The words slip from my lips easily as I speak them into his ear. My hope to bring Bill comfort.

"It's their fault, all theirs. Not yours. They knew what lurks in Derry. The debt that must be paid. They didn't care or love Georgie enough to remember and heed it. Perhaps they wanted instead to pay it with his life to save yours. They turned their heads as he ran down that street. His little boat sailing it's way down, all the way to the sewer drain. It wasn't hard, all too easy. All the more when you don't teach your young to flee the danger that lurks below."

What are these words I'm saying?

I feel my grip tighten around Billy, possessively, holding him in place.

"It was quicker then the others. They lived longer, building up their fears, salting them oh so nicely. But not Georgie. He was spared the worst. It was fairly quick...though I still played just a little..." My voice sounded as if I was trying to sound I felt pity for the actions I had just admitted to.

My brain is screaming, these are not my words! Why am I saying them?

Bill is stiff in my grasp. I can feel his breathing hitch at the words that leave my mouth, but are not my own.

"First a taste. I was ever so hungry. I only had just woken. Took his arm, quick with a snap of my jaws. Oh how he screamed in return. He tried to crawl away. So strong for something so small. But I couldn't let him suffer like that. Pulled him in before he could bleed out. Made it quick and painless as possible after. A swift twist and a crack, he was silent forever. Peaceful. No more pain. No more fear." A rumble perhaps meant to be soothing comes from my chest

Bill has yet to struggle, to try and break free from me, from the grasp that is not of my own wishes. Nor do I smell anything that I deem delicious. NO! What IT deems delicious. Instead of feeling disappointment, I feel pleasure from his bravery, his lack of showing fear facing me. No, IT.

"I didn't remember until after I finished why I was being so merciful...why I somehow felt a tinge of regret...remorse..." IT sighs almost somber, does it really feel this? My chest feels tight as if a weight has been placed on it. Then IT continues, "Bobby liked him... you... I had made a mistake I knew then. My Bobby would be so upset. I let my hunger blind me and now my Bobby is oh so upset with me. Hates me as much as you Bill-y." IT purrs his name, taunting him before showing what feels like the best it can emote as remorse.

"But it was your parents fault. If they kept Georgie inside like Bobby warned, it never would have happened. You'd be a ha-ppy family still and all so oblivious to me. I would have eaten my fill. Return to a

peaceful sleep." A snarl comes out in the end, digging my fingers into Billy's back. No longer just fingers, but cat like claws. Prickling the poor boys back before retracting away. As if a lost of control came with such high emotions.

"I do what I can to make my Bobby happy. He forgets all the bad. Lives happily. Oblivious. No one hurts him....until now. You destroyed that balance Billy. My influence over this town is weakened. Now my Bobby suffers so for it. You should have taken my deal. Stayed behind and saved your friends. You would have made Bobby so happy. A nice obedient friend... hmm. A puppet to keep my Bobby happy. Perhaps a son he would never have. Bobby would be none the wiser and he wouldn't suffer so as he does now. You've made this town vulnerable. My haven is no longer safe. I can smell it. Something noticed, felt the slip. It took the chance. Another lion prowls my territory." A deep but quiet growl comes from my chest.

"Where there was once order there now chaos! Where my deal once stands, protecting the many, death shall ensue. I was merciful. Choose a few. Picked the weak to devour. This trespasser won't be so kind. They shall ravage this town and eat it whole. Burn my town to cinders. Derry will disappear and be forgotten. A mere figment to the rest of your world."

"What are you proposing?" How can Billy be so calm? I'm in a panic, trapped without control, screaming internally. But it occurs to me, if IT wished so, it could kill Bill right here and now. Using me to do the dirty deed. Sending me over the last step, plummeting into insanity.

I can feel the smile pull on my lips as IT feels pleasure in having Billy's attention and corporation.

IT moves smoothly to bring Bill into our sight, though ever holding firm to his arms. No longer so tight to leave bruises.

Bill looks calm, no longer crying, though his eyes were piercing anger. I felt an imaginary shiver down my spine, or was it a real one that even IT felt?

"Such a cleaver boy. A truce for the time. Help Pennywise find the

intruder. Kill it. Everyone happy. Your town survives. Everyone safe." He shook gleefully as if it was the perfect plan. I could make out the faintest sound of jingling bells as he moved.

"Then you just come back and do what you did before. Kill and eat the children?" I keep telling myself Billy is glaring at IT and not me, but I squirm, we squirm under his gaze. Bill makes IT uncomfortable, but why?

IT huffs and shakes IT's head about like a child having a tantrum.

"Not now. Not now. Years from now. You all grown. Moved on. Leave you be. Your children be." He tempts with a assure grin.

"Pennywise will make a new deal with you and them." IT nods towards the still oblivious group.

"Spare their lives and yours. Not a single hair on their heads will be touched. You help Pennywise and Pennywise promise this in return."

Billy studies us for some time before eying us, "you're too weak to find it alone, aren't you?"

I feel my smile drop to one of a frown and then irritation. I can feel a tantrum rising as IT grumbles.

"Pennywise didn't eat his fill. Still hungry. Weaker ..." He snarled being found out.

"You let Bobby go and maybe we'll have a deal."

Our head whips about to stare at Billy. Staring hard as if studying him, but IT must see something I can not as it grins once more.

"Find and kill intruder. Pennywise make a deal..."

As soon as it had all started is how quickly my grip gives along with my legs. Billy is freed from my grasp as I hit the ground, shaking with wide eyed fear.

Bill still as calm as ever crouches to offer a hand to me.

I refuse to take it and break down in a fit of tears, preparing to flee before I feel Bill gab my shoulder.

"IT can't really hurt me or you."

My head shoots up to look at him startled and confused.

"IT's weaker then it was admitting. It held me tighter in the sewer. Just now, that was nothing close to then. I could even see you fighting for control. IT struggled to speak in proper sentences. IT was more focused to make a point and keep the others oblivious." He pointed over his shoulder and to my surprise sure enough none of the group had noticed us, even now we were ignored.

"If something has come here and IT can't take it out, then it's up to all of us to protect this town. No matter what that clown offered."

"B...b..Billy...I...I'm s...s..sorry." I weep knowing the words I spoke for IT cut him deep.

"Bobby, that wasn't you. I know." Even though he assured me I could see him in thought.

Perhaps second guessing what he had just said?

"Let's just enjoy the rest of the day and fill Miss Linda in later. Make plans then." He smirked offering his hand again.

This time I took it, nodding as I stood shakily.

"Y..you're r..rr..right."

"Guys what's taking so long? Come on! The movie is about to start!" Richie bellowed in annoyance. No sign of any idea that a killer clown had just threatened his friend.

Silently Bill and I agreed not to say a word to them of what had just gone on though. Let them be oblivious for the time being. Have time to relax. Once we spoke with Linda and made a plan and we would fill them in. For now we all need a distraction and a good time.

Shaking still I approached the ticket booth.



"E...eight t..t..tickets p.. ."

## 19. Chapter 19

The film didn't distract me well. If anything it only increased my anxiety. My OCD guiding me towards the middle of the row of seats, centering the screen. The group didn't protest as they followed, sitting in front of me. The theater was barren except for us. No worries of any one getting upset as it became apparent that the Richie was going to talk through out the film. Normally something like that would even upset me, but after what had just happened out front, I let it go.

When I found I couldn't focus on the film I would stare at the group in front of me. Observe how they were enjoying themselves. I even caught Bill giving me a look, as if asking if I was alright. I simply smiled with a slight nod and he would nod in return before turning back around to the film or throw food at Richie when he shouted at the screen.

By the end of the film I had not had another influence from IT, but I was a clammy ball of shaking frazzled human being. My eyes were closed tight as I tried to breath deep and slow, evening out my breathes as best I could. All sound was foreign noise and meant nothing as I held myself in a ball in my seat. My head leant on the back of the chair for support as the only thing keeping me up from falling, or sliding free from where I sat.

It wasn't until I felt a hand shake me lightly that I then noticed that someone was saying my name. I focused on the voice trying to pick out who it was. Bill, ever caring, was trying to ask if I needed help. I shook my head side to side ever so slightly. As I kept breathing, counting now as I tried to even it out with a sudden spike of unease.

"He's not going to die on us is he?" Richie ever the snarky one suddenly sounded genuinely concerned for me. "He's looks like he might be ill."

"He's having a panic or anxiety attack. I've read about them. Don't try and force him to do anything, it might make it worse." Eddie informed as I began to assumed the group was all watching me, surrounding me in worry. The lights suddenly turned on. Shining

bright through my eyelids. Causing me to jump and groan.

"Stanley, hand me your jacket."

The light suddenly dims as Bill places said jacket over my head carefully. I feel myself relaxing under the new shade. No one says a word for some time. The sudden quiet from the film ending allows me time to focus myself and breath evenly finally. Slowly testing with one eye, I open it slowly to peek out. I see them all going distance, but still close looking over their chairs in front of me. Bill by my side and Beverly beside him.

I sigh deeply as I close my eyes again and squint shortly.

"S..s....sorry."

"No, don't you apologize for this Bobby. I should have thought about your needs before we came in." Bill looks at me with deep guilt.

I shake my head quick, but slow as it makes me dizzy.

"No, don't a..a..apologize." I can't help but smile at him for his concern.

"I w..wanted you all to have f...fun."

The others I can barely see from under the jacket, though I can tell they too appear to be feeling guilty.

"Don't." I frown, "Please."

"You wanted us to have fun... even if it meant... you were miserable?" Eddie confirming my suspicion from the sound of guilt in his voice.

"That was nice of you Bobby, but... if you don't feel well, you should have told us." Ben sound full of great concern. Almost as much as Bill.

"I... I'll be f...fine." I sigh, though it sounds more miserable then assuring.

"Do you think you can stand? We could go outside and try and get you fresh air." Bill asks, not pushing as he tries to find a way to help me.

"G..give me a ... a moment." I close my eyes and breath slowly. The nausea I had been feeling for some time slowly began to fade as my heart rate began to slow back down. I don't know how long it was, but once I finally felt calm enough and assure of myself, I attempted to stand.

I could feel not only Bill's hands on me, but a few others. All trying to make sure I had support if I should suddenly lose balance or worse, faint. I felt myself sway a bit, the hands ever present and trying to support me.

"I... I'm alright." I say barely loud enough I'm sure for them to hear. "I... I'd like that fresh air now." I can't help the small grin that comes up to my lips as I peak out at them.

All their looks of concern turn to smiles as well as they see my own. I can hear Bill sigh as he continues to lend a hand to me as we make our way out of the theater slowly. As soon as the sun hits me, I smile all the more. Closing my eyes again. Taking in the warmth from it, letting it sooth my nerves.

I can feel all eyes on me as I begin to relax all the more.

"I.. I'll be alright now." I let out a long sigh before looking to the group.

"Good... w.. we were all really worried about you Bobby."

The group nods agreeing to what Bill has just said.

"I.. I'm sorry how much of an ass I was before man." Richie rubs at the back of his neck, not making eye contact. I don't blame him for his reaction and find it easy to take the apology.

"It's O..okay."

I can see him finally look up with a grin, "Thanks. Uh... w.. we saved you part of our hoard of candy and popcorn. Even a soda."

"I'm not really supposed to have it, so I thought I'd give you mine." Eddie shrugged. "I rather not rot my teeth like these guys."

I feel a chuck escape as I take in his and Richie's words. All of them being so kind to have even saved me something, let alone thought of

me.

"Thanks. I... I'm actually getting a bit hungry."

They take this as a good sign and offer their gifts of goodies. I take a sip of the pop and sigh not having noticed how dry my mouth had become in all that panic.

"Mmmm, my favorite! I love Dr Pepper."

"You like Dr Pepper?" They seem surprised as Richie asks.

I nod, looking at them with a raised brow, "Yes... why? You think I can't enjoy things?"

They look shocked and unsure how to answer. Bill takes the silent to respond.

"It was Georgie's favorite..."

I stop sipping on the straw as I look at him surprised.

"I.. I..."

"No don't apologize for enjoying something like my brother did. Everyone is just... well trying not to upset me since we..."

"Since we confirmed he was dead." Ben mumbled, finishing what Bill was trying to tell me. "We didn't want to say anything that might remind him...I guess... we're just sort of still trying to not hurt Bill with those memories."

I look between the group and Bill and nod, "But... you sometimes have to hurt..."

They look at me confused, though Bill seems to understand as I continue to speak.

"Memories... even the best ones can hurt. Cause one pain. Sometimes its a good pain worth feeling to remember those best memories of the good times."

They seem to begin to understand and realize they can't protect Bill from everything and shouldn't deprive him of remembering his brother, even if it should hurt him to do so.

"Thank you Bobby... For understanding." Bill smiles, trying his best not to try and use that moment to hug me. I'm glad he remembers how awkward I can be and uncomfortable I am with too much contact with others. But it's not about me at this moment and I feel like Bill is more a friend than a random stranger now.

Pushing my urges aside, I pull him into a hug, "Just for you." He mumble in his ear.

"Thanks Bobby... I know how this can be ... uncomfortable."

"All the more proving how I feel of you as my friend. Linda has been the only other person I really let this close..."

"Friend?" He seems surprised by my words.

"That... that is if you don't mind being a friend to slow adult like myself." I mumble pulling away, suddenly feeling awkward and exposed.

"You're not slow Bobby. You're just different. You're smart, smarter than people think or you think. I think of you as a friend too... a big brother really." He looks like he feel just as awkward as me now.

"If I had a brother... I'd be luck if he was anything like you Billy." I can't help the wide toothy grin that spreads across my face. I've never had a sibling, or at least I don't remember having one. As I think of this fact it only becomes all the more apparent to me how much of my life I don't really remember.

"Bobby... are you okay?" Bill looks concerned and it takes me a moment to realize I am not longer smiling but crying silently.

"I..." I pause looking to the rest of the group. They are watching silently as we converse. I swallow and look down and away, "I ... I don't remember if I've ever had a sibling..."

I can't see it, but I can feel the group become solemn at my words. They must be beginning to realize just how much of a messed up case I am and just how much IT has taken or destroyed in my life.

"We'll figure this out Bobby." Bill tries his best to reassure me. "We'll

get your memories back and defeat IT once and for all."

"Yeah, like how hard can it be. We beat it once. We can do it again." Richie brags, getting nods and yeahs from the rest of the group.

Bill smiles at his friends enthusiasm. Where they had all feared IT before, now courage was taking hold. I couldn't help but smile as well at how brave the group was.

"Thank you... all of you."

I sip on my drink a while more as they let me gather myself before we all get on our bikes. The food and drink securely held in the basket of the front of my bike for travel. I take my helmet and place it on once more. Though I feel no safer than I had before. My mind is not protected even now.

I follow, the group making sure I'm in the middle. A great change from our first journey. They keep a protective circle as we all head toward one of their many haunts. We find a picnic table and dump our hoard upon it. I drag another over easily to join the other, making sure everyone has room. My long legs taking up one side of the benches as the group takes seats on the remaining open ones.

I look through the pile of candy and pick out my favorites that the others haven't eaten or saved what is left. The group chatters about personal things and random things they enjoy. I take my time to organize each candy by color in its own kind. Each pile from my favorite flavor to least. M&Ms, Starbursts, Skittles, all organized before I take a moment to decide which to start with first.

"W..what are you doing man?" Richie was watching me curiously and actually not being snarky.

"I... I guess I like to organize them..." I tell him honestly, squirming under the attention. "Then eat the ones I like least and make my way to my favorites." I shrug pulling the yellow Starbursts towards me.

"Huh...You have some quarks don't ya. Nothing bad about it or anything." He now seemed to squirm, perhaps feeling awkward.

Feeling the awkwardness build, I popped the candy in my mouth

wrapper and all.

"What are you doing?" Richie look startled by my action. The rest of the group turning to stare at me. Confused as to what was happening. "He just freaking put a Starburst wrapper whole into his mouth!"

Eddie made a disgusted look, sticking his tongue out.

"That's disgusting. Do you know how many germs are on those things!"

I snort, moving the candy about in my mouth. Eddie having his break down while the others continue to watch me curiously. With a grin, an end of wrapper peeks out of my mouth. I carefully take the end in my long fingers before pulling it all out whole. The candy gone having been freed.

"Wow. How did you do that?" Mike asked impressed.

"All tongue." I shrug. "I figured out I could do it randomly one day. I was curious since I could tie cherry steams. Next step up." I can't help feeling full of pride at how they all look at me so impressed.

It's in this moment feeling so relax and pride that I experience the worst pain I can imagine, or in my case, remember. My arms wrap around me as I fall to the side, holding myself tight as I curl up into a ball. I feel like something burning hot was stuck into my chest. Gasping for air that has been knocked out of me. Looking about in fright, trying to make sense of what had just happened. The tears blurring my vision as I lift my hand into my line of sight, but I don't see blood or signs of anything that would cause such distress to my body.

"BOBBY!" Bill is by my side trying to understand what is going on. "What happened?" He looked me over, trying to find anything at all.

"I... I don't know." He sob, trying to understand why this was happening. I didn't get much time to get over it as I felt the feeling suddenly hit again into my side. Screaming as I feel like something is ripping all the way through me. But this isn't the last. I feel the pain several more times as I lay on the ground withering in pain screaming.



As fast as the pain started, it began to slowly devolve away, leaving me breathing heavily. My surroundings began to come back to me as I notice the worried group around me.

"Bob.. Bobby? Are... are you okay?" Bill looked pale. Drained of all life. His eyes so wide. I could smell it then. FEAR. He was actually afraid. Afraid of losing me. "

I... I'm okay...b.. but something is wrong." I sob, "Something is very wrong."

## 20. Chapter 20

"Mister, are you alright?" A quiet question, floating on the cool autumn air.

"I...I'm fine." 'A grin, give the little thing a grin. Don't distress the poor thing with your weakness.' The side of his face pulled tight to do as told. Turning slowly with wet checks and reddened eyes to see a sight he hadn't expected.

The small girl, no older than five watched the man curiously, deep in thought. Her pink tails reached beyond her shoulders, just stopping at her shoulder blades. Held in place with hair bands that pulled at her hair when their use was done. Decorated with red ribbon on either side to match her shiny red shoes. A dress of lacy white, matching tights and tiny gloves. A beautiful red sash tied into a bow adorned her middle.

Dressed so pretty as if for a tea party, or a Sunday service, but it is a Thursday nor is it a holiday of any kind that one would dress so finely for. His brow raised with curiosity. He doesn't believe in ghosts, but he wonders for but a moment if one would look so from the many children that have met an awful fate in this small town.

She watched him just as curiously before she seemed to make up her mind on something.

"You must be very sad or hurt. I could hear you crying from the trail." She pointed to her right, staring up the path she had come from. "I cried like that when momma and daddy told me we were moving here...." The girl looked saddened and as if she might cry herself as she confessed her own sadness.

"It ... it is nothing. Merely bad dreams." He spoke quickly, standing slowly to face her. 'We must get rid of her. She can't stay around us.' But before he could say a word the girl did something he hadn't expected.

She looked a moment down at the ground before her, taking a step down the incline as best she could. The ground was slick though with

debris and rocks. The bottom of her nice shoes slippery even upon pavement was all the worse here. Her arms flung up as her shriek filled the air as her footing gave, falling backwards.

At the last moment long strong arms caught her, pulling her close before she could hit the ground. Preventing her beautiful dress from being soiled by the surrounding mud and leaves.

"Careful! Are you alright small one?" 'Stop, don't ask. Place her down and leave.'

"Yes, thanks to you mister." She beamed a smile yet to lose a single baby tooth. Cheesy so bright and rosy.

"Why are you so finely dressed?" 'Don't ask questions, send her on her way!'

"Pictures. I start school soon and momma wanted me pretty for them. I'm so tired of wearing it all day." She pouted as she he carried carefully back to the top from where she had fallen. The forest was thick here and one could easily get lost in this part if one abandoned the trail. "I rather wear my pants and favorite shirt. I can't climb any trees in this."

He couldn't stop the chuckle that left him at her words. Such an explorer and quite different from other small girls he had encountered over the years.

"Where is your mother?" 'Let the child wander alone. It'll find its own way home.'

"Back at school talking to the grown ups. I got bored. It's so different here. I wanted to explore." She shrugged, looking about even now in awe of the scenery. Such a curious child. Not many adults would find this forest of interest, and the children of town often found it frightening and stayed far from it when IT was awake.

"She'll be worried if she can't find you." 'Not the first nor the last a parent shall worry.'

She reached suddenly up with her tiny gloved hand, wiping away a tear from the his face that he had some how missed.

"You were crying. It must have been a really bad dream to make you cry."

She stares at him with such concern that he'd never seen or felt given towards him by a single living soul. Not even the Turtle, it had only been a lie.... A lie he had believed so much.

But this small child actual cared.

'Don't grow attached. They grow up. Wither away then die. Their bodies feed the weeds. Only hurt will come from this. Stop before it's too late.'

"It would be a pain I'm willing to suffer for one that cares for one like me. Please, let me have this one for myself. We take so many...."

'...this once...to keep you calm and appeased. Happy and well. To keep to entertain you and your mind from wandering to what we do. We shall keep her. Protect her. She is fragile. They die so easily. But in exchange you will forget. Everything you've known until this point must be forgotten and locked away. And when the day comes that this frail child dies, only then will you remember. Do we wish for this so badly to lose it all?'

"I'll never let anything happen to her. As long as she lives in Derry, she'll be safe. I'd lose my memories a thousand times over for this one chance."

'When did we become so soft?' He sighed deeply.

"What's your name small one?" A smile growing upon his lips as he watched her curiously, entertained already by this small girl.

She giggled at his question. Oh how sweet it sounded. Like wind chimes. "you talk funny. I'm Linda." She smiled, arms wrapped around his neck, keeping her safe and secure as he climbed the slip slop.

His smile only growing bigger, he chuckled answering, "I'm Bobby. Would you like to be my friend?"

"Sure!" She squealed with glee. "My first friend here. It's nice to meet

you Bobby." She hugged him tight, burying her face in his shoulder.

He stiffened unused to such such close and emotional forms of contact. Relaxing slowly, as he sighed, he could grow to like human contact like this.

"It is a pleasure to meet you Linda."

He took a moment to free one hand. Easily holding Linda in his other arm. He pulled a shiny red balloon as if out of thin air, offering it with a charming smile to her. Linda was captivated by it and in awe by such gift presented in such amazing way. A magic trick. Oh how she loved such things.

"Now lets get you back. Too many children have gotten lost out here." 'All of them delicious and tastily full of fear.'

Linda looks saddened by his words as she took the ballon, letting Bobby set her back on her own feet upon reaching the top of the incline.

"They must be so scared." She looked about as if she might find them right then and there. "I want to become a cop some day. Then I can help all of them find their way home."

Bobby smiled sadly, "That is a very noble cause small one. Perhaps you shall one day be the greatest cop to ever live in Derry." 'Perhaps even one that could see through even us...'

She smiled, giggling with a blush at his comment. "You really think so? Thank you Bobby."

Bobby offered his hand, her taking it as he guided them back up the trail to the school. Pausing at the edge of the woods. He began staring with uncertainty and unease at the horizon.

"What's wrong Bobby?"

Linda squeezed his hand trying to comfort him.

"I am already beginning to forget..."

He continued to stare into the distance as the memories began to fade. Not just the past year, but the years before that and so on. His entire life disappearing.

"I...I'm afraid..."

Linda wrapped her arms tight around him. Confused by his words, but trying her best to help her new friend.

"Don't worry Bobby, I'll stay here with you. I won't leave alone. It'll be okay."

'Enjoy your time...while it lasts...'

Bobby broke his gaze from the orange sky line, the autumn suns light fading as it set. Looking down to the small girl holding to him. A bright smile replaced the look of fear.

"Hello. What's your name small one?"

## 21. Chapter 21

I stand as soon as I am able. My body shaking with exhaustion from the sudden phantom pain. Though now gone, the shock from the sudden pain has left me confused, disoriented and giving me the start of a headache.

'...move...'

Bill and the rest of the children help me sit up, steadying me as I take everything around me in again. My mind reeling as I tries to understand what has just happened.

'...something is wrong...'

I didn't even know I am mumbling this over and over until Bill shakes me gently.

"Bobby, Bobby, I need you to try and focus. I know it's hard, but we're trying to understand what just happened. You're saying 'something is wrong'... what's wrong? What can we do to help you?"

All eyes are on me, varying with looks of concern. They share looks between one another. I can hear what sounds like Richie whispering to Bill, "Should we call Linda? I mean, maybe she knows something, fix him maybe?"

'RUN!'

My head whips up, staring into the distance before I leap to my feet. A gasp coming from the surrounding children, jumping back at my sudden movement.

"Something is wrong."

It appears to be the only thing I am able to say. The only thing going through my head. The headache building as it feels like something is trying to claw it's way out. Screaming in distress from behind my eyes.

'RUN!'

My long legs take me rushing to my bike. Kicking up the stand and

pushing the helmet aside in my need to rush. I was already peddling away before any of the group has the ability to move from where they are still standing. I can't wait. I have to go. I have to RUN!

I'm paddling as fast as my leg will allow me. Following a pull. An unseen string towards what I needed to run to. What I am so desperate to get to. My head is throbbing now. I hear horrifying sounds going on in my head. It sounds like an animal in pain, perhaps dying. But still I peddle. Not letting anything stop me.

I don't know how long it is until I reach the end of the pull. I have no idea where I have ended up. But the sky has begun to darken overhead. A sudden storm is brewing, blowing in without warning.

For the first time since my dash here do I slow down. The world seems to come to a stand still. Slowly I walk towards where the pull finally reaches an end.

Smoke.

It is bellowing up, dark as the sky is growing overhead. As I draw closer, inching my way forward, I can see the source of the smoke. A bellowing fire.

But this can't be right. It isn't a campfire as I would expect. No, is one of the worst things I can remember seeing at this time.

There is a car engulfed in flames.

I leave my bike behind, letting it fall a side as I walk the rest of the way. No form of support as my body begins to tremor.

How did I know this was here?

Why am I drawn here?

I'm feeling suddenly nauseous. Unease growing as I look around me. There is no one. Not a single soul has come to inspect the scene. Not even the people in the surrounding homes seem to notice the car sitting out their front doors. Flames rises high as it burns so eerily bright.

The sound of crackling flames is covered by the moaning sound



coming from the frame of the car, disagreeing with the unbearable heat. This was a fire that could burn for hours. The fuel helping the fire burn all the hotter now.

Even though I can feel the heat from the distance I am currently, I draw closer. I had to see what was inside the car.

I don't know how I can even bare it as I stand next to the drivers side window. Peering in as the flames lick out towards me. Searching for more to devour. Threatening to catch my clothing a blaze.

My eyes lock on what is left of a figure inside. There is no way to tell who it is any longer. The fire has burned and blackened the flesh, melting the body into the seat.

My mouth is suddenly a desert as I try to swallow. Moisten it with needed saliva. Though not even that seems to help with the dryness.

I can't move. Only stare. My eyes locked on to the charcoaled burnt figure.

I feel tears prickle at my eyes. The smoke must be burning them, but I know the truth. It doesn't cause the sudden pain of loss I am feeling gathering in my chest.

"Bobby?"

I tear my eyes away from the figure briefly to see Bill and the rest of the group have caught up with me. Some how they have found me, which I am impressed by.

"Bobby, you need to get away from there. You'll get hurt."

Bill tries to get closer to grab me, to pull me away from beside the vehicle, but he can't even get half way before retreating from the heat of the flames.

"Bobby, please." Beverly coaxes from behind Bill. All the children look startled. FEAR. I can smell it. They are afraid....for me? They are afraid I will get hurt being where I was, but I can't move away.

'...we can't leave her... you know that...'

"BOBBY NO!"

Screams fill the air as I reach out and grab, pulling on the door of the car. The flames licking and trying to eat away what it can. My clothing doesn't stand a chance as they begin to burn away. Though my flesh stays some how unharmed.

With a single tug, I rip the door free. Tossing it aside as I reach in to free what is left of her behind the wheel. I can't leave her like this. I can't leave her here alone. This is wrong.

With a bit of effort, doing my best to keep from harming her any further, I am able to get her free from the seat. Pulling her close to my chest, safe and sound as I step back and away from the car.

I hold her close, Protective as I bring her away from the hot flames. Taking a seat with her in my arms a good distance away from the flames.

There I hold her to me. Tears silently fall. Growing from a stream to a waterfall. I stare at what is left of what I loved so dear in my arms.

"Bobby?"

Bill cautiously approaches me. Keeping a distance as he covers his nose from the smell of burnt flesh and hair.

"W...what..."

"I couldn't leave her there..." My voice wavers. "Not like that..."

He looks to the group confused. They themselves returning him the same look.

Bill stands near by, but doesn't touch me. Giving me the needed space I often begged for.

"Who Bobby?"

A shuddering sob leaves me as I now knew why I was drawn here.

Why I had been in such sudden pain.

Drawn to this horrifying scene.

To this body.

I hold her closer to me with as much love and care as I always have.

"...Linda..."

## 22. Chapter 22

"Let's try this again Mr Gray. Why were you at the scene of Officer Linda Spring's murder?"

The two detectives interrogating me have not let up once since I have been brought in. My mind still not processing it all as the headache that had started to form hours ago now rages on. The pain making it harder to focus on what they are asking me.

I try to shade my eyes from the bright lights of the room. Closing my eyes as I look down, unable to cover them with my cuffed hands.

How this ended here keeps playing over in my head. I'm trying to understand what has gone so wrong for me to be the suspect of killing my own best friend.

---

"Bo..bobby, how ... are you sure that is Miss Linda?" Bill's voice is strained as he tries not to become emotional as I am now. The rest to the children are not doing as well.

I nod at Bill's question, finding it hard to admit it out loud with my own voice. To make it all the more real.

Before Bill can ask me anything more, the sound of sirens alert us of the local police arriving. The lights of their vehicles growing brighter in the sun set. Only rivaled by the bright flames behind us.

Sound of slamming doors soon follow with hurried foot falls.

"Kids step away from that man!" The officers shout pulling their guns on me. I can hear their boots rushing towards us before the sounds of a skirmish and raised shouts of protest as the officers grab and drag the children away from me.

Bill is screaming, fighting for them to let him go. Questioning why their motives. I can hear another set of foot falls approaching me with care. Cautious... uncertainty... why?

They try to wrap their arms under my own to lift me away, but I will

not budge. My body suddenly gaining weight to keep me where I sit. I will not leave Linda. I can't. My brain is in a fury of sudden rage that these men would try and take me from her.

I glare up at them, hearing gasps, I don't understand why at first. The officers release me and back away as if out of instinct. Self preservation perhaps.

"Bobby. Your eyes." Bill tries his best from where he is held now to tell me what has caused the sudden reaction. Reaching up as if I will feel what he means, I touch around my eyes with one hand, never letting Linda go with the other.

"Bobby, you need to calm down." Bill pleads. I can smell the fear around him. A fear for my safety.

I take a deep breath, trying to calm myself.

'Kill them. Kill them all!' The voice growls into my head.

"I can't... they haven't done anything to hurt me..."

A feel a snarl leave my lips as I shake my head about, before taking a deep breath, calming myself.

In the end, ever so reluctantly, I had allowed the officers to take me in. Watching with deep sorrow and a watchful gaze as they called in a corner to come take Linda away.

I sat in the back of the vehicle of what felt like hours, watching as they skewered the scene. Even in my calm as it grew dark enough with the light, I could seen in my reflection now what Bill had been telling me. My eyes truly were not my own. They were glowing bright yellow. I can only imagine what color they were when I had snapped out before.

The children were taken away in separate vehicles. All looking to me with worry for my own sake.

Bill the last to be taken stared towards me with sorrow. His fear for me growing as they took him far from the scene.

—

One of the officers, the less kind of the two, sighs loudly as he stands.

"Mr Gray, if you do not cooperate we will have to detain you."

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you..."

They look to each other before the officer continues.

"Now we are getting somewhere." He smacks his partner's arm lightly.

"Go on then Mr Gray, try us."

Not looking up, I do my best to stay calm as I tell them.

They sudden pain, a pull, just knowing upon arrival.

They are quiet for only a moment before they both groan.

"You're right. We don't believe you. It's obvious that you're not in your right mind Mr Gray."

They signal someone and soon there is two officers joining up.

With more force than needed, they pulled me up and out of the small room I have been held in.

We ended up outside a cell which I soon find out is meant for me.

My hands are soon freed, but the relief is short lived as I am shoved into the cell. Quite too rough for my liking.

A cage I have done nothing to deserve.

Terror begins to rise inside me. I don't like this. I am now trapped, like an animal.

It doesn't help that I can feel something inside me squirm and try to claw its way out.

I am not the only one here that doesn't like being locked up.

"You must stop..." With no one near I feel it is safe to speak out loud.

"We must escape! Find the intruder!"

A snarl rips from my lips as I curl up on the bench inside the cell. Trying to hold the beast inside.

"No, we can't. We have to stay."

A growl rumbles in my chest in its protest.

Why don't I just accept what IT wants and let it tear through this place. Find and kill who did this to our Linda?

'You know why...' IT purred quietly.

"We're not strong enough to fight him..."

'He knew... he knew she was ours...' IT moans, sounding mournful as myself.'He kills what is ours. Takes what is ours.'

"Like a lion..." IT's words from before making all the more sense.

My knowledge of Lions now coming to mind. Instead of having defeated or killed IT, he is playing on IT's weakness. Trying to destroy what left of IT's hold there is and all that is connected to IT.

I can feel my face pale as it now occurs to me. If he knew Linda was connected to us, then it wouldn't be long until he connected the children and killed them as well.

'THEY'RE MINE!' IT roars in rage. I grasp at my head as the pain builds. Flashes of images I have never seen before. Bill hovering over me. All the children, armed.

"He...T..thrust H..his F..fists Against the P...Post..." I feel myself rocking back and forth as fear builds in my chest.

'You're remembering....' IT grumbles as if reading my mind.

I sit up startled, "Remembering?"

'Everything...'

## 23. Chapter 23

The night was endless. It felt like it would go on forever. The sound of rain hitting the roof was louder than I thought possible. A clap of thunder startled me from my concentration on the soothing sound of such a heavy rain. It was the only thing keeping me sane as I lay on the cot provided in my cell. The lights had been turned off a time ago. Only the faint glow of the exit sign illuminated the room.

IT had grown silent after telling me my lost memories were finding their way back. No longer needed to be kept at bay with the only reason for it now dead and gone.

In the darkness I had found myself crying again. Silently not wishing to be watched or questioned any further by the officers that kept watch. They brought food at what I expect had been dinner time here. But I couldn't bring myself to eat a thing. Just lay facing away from it, curled up, quietly letting tears fall.

They took it before the lights were turned off. Thankfully not saying a word about my absence of eating. It was quiet now, all except for the raging storm outside.

The sewers will fill tonight...perhaps flood if it continues to rain like this.

Why did I care?

'It's part of our home...'

"Shut up!" I hiss as low as I can. I didn't need to bring attention to myself shouting at a voice no one else could hear.

Silence eerily came. It felt wrong how quiet IT suddenly had become.

"How do we stop who did this?" Mumbling low to IT and myself.

'We must get our strength back... hunt...'

I felt my body stiffen at the suggestion as screams filled my ears, flashes of frightened children's faces.



"NO!" I shouted, biting my lip at my stupidity as I waited quietly for any guards response to my out burst. But none came. Sighing heavily I closed my eyes to calm myself.

"We can't do that...I won't."

"Then something... larger?"

I can't believe I'm even considering what IT's suggesting. What would that mean for me? Will I just stand aside and wait for IT to do the deed and have him come back to posses me once more? I could try and flee then perhaps, but then I'd still be blamed for Linda's death and no means to defend myself.

As if IT reading my mind IT grumbled, 'Only the deserving. The wicked. The evil as you deem them. Will this please my Bobby?'

It was better then the alternative.

"Yes... please.."

I felt my chest loosen. I didn't even notice how tight it had become.

'Not as tasty.' IT whined as if A child told to eat it's veggies.

'Sleep... Rest... we need it..'

I couldn't protest that. Exhaustion suddenly taking over as my eyes grew heavy.

The next thing I knew there was a man yelling and shaking me to get up. A guard yanking me up and leading me back to the small room of questioning once more.

"It's come to light that you Mr Gray showed up at the station drunk to harass Officer Linda."

Wait...what?

My eyes focus instantly on the man speaking at me.

"T..that's not true."

"Not according to Officer Aubrey. He states here that you showed up drunk dressed as a clown and began to threaten and harass Officer Linda as well as himself."

The nerve of that asshole!

"That's not what happened. I don't even drink! He was harassing me and Linda stopped him."

I'm boiling over close to shouting at the man telling me these lies.

"Seeing it was just the three of you, one no longer able to speak, it's your word verses his."

I want to scream that isn't true that Bill was there as well. But my mouth freezes partly open before a word can escape. Aubrey hadn't mentioned Bill. The only other witness. The only other living witness.

My mouth slammed shut as I stop protesting, taking this new detail in. If he didn't mention him... I can't either. I couldn't chance Bill's safety for my own.

I looked down and away from the detective, eyeing my hands as I fiddled them. Noticing slowly the bandage that Linda had placed there is long gone. Most likely burned away by the flames. The cuts missing, as if I was never injured to begin with.

"Mr Gray the evidence is building against you. Perhaps if you confess to fighting with Officer Linda, we can work out what happened to her after that...perhaps why you killed her.."

My eyes shot up at those words.

"What?"

He looks at me as if I've said something stupid. Offending his own intelligence.

"You killed her, didn't you?"

I am appalled by this accusation. Irritating growing as I glare at the man harshly.

"I would never hurt Linda."

"From what we found at the house, I'd say that's a lie Mr Gray. There is evidence of a fight. I'd say you and her had a lovers tiff. Perhaps things got of hand. One thing lead to another and she ended up dead. You panicked and thought the best way to get rid of the body was to make it look like an accident. If you confess now we can lower the

charges and make a deal."

I look at this man in disgust.

"Lovers tiff? What are you assuming of my relationship with Linda?"

He stared at me as if I was oblivious.

"That you and Linda were a couple. She often spoke of you to her peers. She would spend time at your place and you her's."

"We are friends. Nothing more then family. A siblings love. I've never thought of her in such a manner you suggest."

"Not from what I've been hearing. Openly kissing..."

I can't believe the lies building in front of me.

'He's altering their minds...'

My body stiffens. My back going ridged straight.

"The intruder?"

'Yes.'

A low growl rumbled in my chest. Who ever this was, he had taken it too far with Linda. Now the fear of him going after the Losers angered me more then I had ever felt in my current memories.

"I'll Kill Him!"

The detective in front of me became silent, causing me to look up to see why. He was staring at my hands. My eyes going to them I saw what had caught his attention. They weren't my hands anymore. More like claws forming in my rage.

As soon as I noticed they disappeared. The detective seemed dazed before blinking multiple times, focusing once more. Forgetting what he had saw it would appear.

"The evidence is stacking up Bob. You won't be able to hide from the truth much longer."

A hurried knock came to the door. The detective stood to answer it. The other detective from the night before was in the door way,

whispering quickly to the one that was with me. Both turned to look at me before the one on the other side of the door handed off a file to the one on my side. He seemed to look whatever was inside over before a most malicious grin came to his lips.

"It would appear we didn't need to wait long. We have the evidence right here." He shock the file at me before sitting once more.

"This here pins you for it all. You shot her multiple times."

My face paled at his words.

"One time in the heart before multiple times else where in the chest. It's a blessing only she was dead before you had put her in that car and set fire to it. Fuel was found poured over her and all around the vehicle. Making sure to burn as much evidence away as possible, but we found it. You sick Bastard, we had to identify her from her dental records!"

I felt myself jump as he slammed the file and fists onto the table in front of me. All the more making sense what had happened to me. The sharp pain in my chest over and over. It was her pain. I felt her dying.

Tears brimmed and flowed over suddenly as I let the sobs out. My best friend killed and she had been in such pain. He had even let her suffer enough for me to feel it fully. Let her bleed out slowly. He hadn't given a kill shot to the heart, she wouldn't have been alive to feel the rest if he had.

"Crying isn't going to save your sorry ass Bob. With this your going to be locked up for a long time. Good riddance." The detective growled as he signaled for me to be taken back to my cell.

As they moved me, I tried to get a glance at the file, open wide for him to read. But to my shock there was nothing there. It was blank. Every page. No name on the folder that held it. Not a single word on the papers within.

I screamed in a rage. Kicking, struggling as I yelled protests. But all fell on deaf ears. They couldn't see the reality of it.

Their minds too molded and controlled already.  
The intruder wanted me gone and this is how he would do it.

False charges, no evidence, nothing but tricks and illusions.  
I wasn't the only one in a rage. IT was seething under the surface of it all. Bottled, bubbling as the pressure grew.

'They are not our prey... they are fools being used... tricked...' IT snarled viciously. I felt like snapping my teeth at the next person to touch me in my struggle.

'Don't! Play along. Give us time...'

I stopped my struggling, listening to IT. IT was right. I had to calm. If I did anything now the intruder may just try and kill me.

'We'll use this to our advantage.'

"H...how?"

'You shall see. They want us to be locked away. We'll be locked away. An animal in a cage full of prey.'

## 24. Chapter 24

It was no surprise at all to me when I wasn't allowed a lawyer or even a proper trial to defend myself. I wasn't allowed any visitors either. Though I didn't protest it. I had no one left but Bill and the rest of the Losers. Even if they were allowed to come visit, I wouldn't accept them. I couldn't risk the intruder killing them as well.

I spent the few days I had in the cells of the police station before I heard news of where I would be taken to next. In the mean time this didn't stop the officers that believed the false evidence to glare at me or at the worst when no one else was there to watch they would beat me.

The first time it happened I had no idea it was coming. Confusion on my face, but assuming I was to be pulled out for interrogation once more ended with me bent over and a fist deep in my stomach. The air knocked out of me as I fell to the floor, only to be kicked repeatedly as I tried to protect myself. Covering my face and trying to protect my stomach, I curled up, a few kicks landing in my stomach before I could keep the rest out.

This continued all the way to the day of my moving to where I would reside for how long, I was not sure. They had the most fun the night before the move. Their last chance to get what they felt as best revenge seeing they knew they would lose their jobs and worse if they tried to kill me.

I wasn't sure where I was headed. I was cuffed hands, waist, and ankles before lead out to the vehicle that would take me to my new destination. Once inside they locked me to the floor of the vehicle. Another precaution to prevent me from trying to escape, or perhaps lash out at them.

I grew nervous as we went. Would we be leaving Maine? I couldn't remember a time I had lived outside of Derry, that alone was frightful to leave what I knew so well.

I didn't dare to ask a single question. Keeping my mouth closed and my eyes to the floor of the vehicle. IT silent the entire ride.

IT rarely spoke to me during our stay in our cell. The only times being when I was left alone after the beating. IT would speak to me as if trying to sooth me. Promises of revenge. As if IT wasn't sure what to say other then that. Hoping it would be the answer to all the pain I was going through.

The more I listened to IT speak, the more I felt we were very much a like. IT would sound confused at times, unsure of what words it should say. How to comfort a person. How to talk to one as well. IT would grow silent when I didn't reply, as if in deep thought, then try again. Though at times IT would become frustrated and become silent as myself in my own frustration.

Right now I wished IT would talk to me. Every second to this long ride adding to my anxiety.

"Have you ever been out of Derry?"

For a moment I thought IT wouldn't reply, but then a beat later I heard IT.

'Yes...'

I sighed accepting the answer and feeling a bit of comfort. Hoping that wherever we were headed would still be inside Maine. Perhaps a place IT had been before.

"Where else have you been?"

'About...'

"Will you tell me were?"

I thought then that IT would refuse, but to my surprise IT continued to answer my question.

'Colorado...'

"Colorado? Why would you go there?"

'You asked where, not why.' IT grumbled as if I had offended IT.

'I... I'm just curious...'

IT huffed before IT continued.

'There was a Hotel there...'

Before I could ask anymore the vehicle pulled to a stop.

For the first time since the journey began I dare to look up. I hear the front doors of the vehicle open as the guards get out. The one in back with me keeping an eye on me as the back doors open. The bright sun overhead blinding me.

As I try to block the sun and see once more, the two guards from the front pull me out as soon as the guard with me has unlocked me from the floor.

Still blinded, they push me down a path towards a bricked building.

As my vision clears some I can make out the fencing and barbed wire around us. Shouts catch my attention. I see men all in the same color and type of clothing in a fenced in yard. Another shove alerts me that I have stopped. Continuing on I try to understand where I am.

The confusion must be clear on my face as a guard I don't know chuckles at me, "Welcome Shawshank State Prison Kid."

I'm pushed along into the building and down halls with many doors until we reach the one with the words 'Warden Dale Lacy' printed on the door.

One of the guards knocked on the door, "Come in."

We entered, me more being pushed and dragged when I didn't move fast enough for their liking.

"We have your newest inmate."

The man stood from his seat, coming over to eye me over. Unlike the guards with me, he seemed to look at me unsure. As if he was trying to figure me out. I hunched feeling awkward while he circled me.

"Alright, let's get him off your hands then." He went back to his desk to press a button on a fairly large speaker upon it.

"Kate, send in a guard to help escort our new inmate to his cell."

"Yes sir."



I looked at the machine curiously. I hadn't seen one of those before. I'd seen my fair share of a phone, but not this sort. If it was even a phone.

"You can un-cuff him and be on your way gentlemen."

The group of guards looked at Mr. Lacy unsure.

"Are you... are you sure about that sir. He has killed a cop."

He waved his hand, shooing the very idea I could have away.

"This whole place is full of officers of the law, he wouldn't get far. Now get on a move on. I'm sure you lot are very eager to get back home."

With one last look to one another, they nodded before beginning to remove the cuffs from my wrist, middle, and ankles.

I couldn't help my sudden urge and movement to rub my wrists. They were tender and had red marks left on them. They had made sure to make everything extra tight and uncomfortable for me before we had left.

I stayed quiet as they glared at me once more before leaving. Slumping more in relief of them being finally gone and myself no longer having to worry when the next beat down would occur.

"Alright son, let's get you settled in." Mr. Lacy was the first somewhat kind voiced person to speak to me since my arrest. I couldn't bring myself to ruin the moment and simply nodded as if my voice itself would have him turn on me.

The requested guard appeared shortly. Him and Mr. Lacy guiding me to the showers to get cleaned up and changed in my new clothes. I hadn't been allowed a shower in so long. Even if the water was colder than I liked, I didn't care, it felt so nice as it took away the grim on my skin.

I washed as quick as I could, scrubbing myself to make sure each piece of dirt was gone before leaving the waters to dress even quicker. I didn't wish to upset these men and create another cycle of abuse for myself here as well.

I looked at them unsure of what I should do next, which I was thankful that they didn't expect me too. I was lead to an area farther beyond the cells that was near where I had entered. It was some time before we finally reached the far end of the prison and to my new cell.

What relief I thought I would have was shortly shattered as I saw that I would not be staying in my own cell. No, I would be sharing it with another, a real criminal. Someone that I had no idea if was here for something minor or worse.

"This is where you'll be staying Kid." Mr. Lacy confirmed my horror. "Cell number six six six. You're cellmate here, well he's killed a lot of people and some we haven't even found. Won't even be civil and tell us were. Why it was decided you take this cell... I'm sorry Kid. Just do your best to not upset him and I'll see what I can do about moving you to a different cell as soon a possible."

I can't help but look up at him surprised. He has such concern for me. Perhaps he didn't believe what I was being sent here for?

I nodded, looking meek as I could before making my way into the cell. Mr Lacy looking worried for me while I came face to face with a huge man looking all too happy to see me. A grin one would see in their nightmares as he tried to tower over me. What he had in muscle size he lacked in height. Even so, I was so hunched over, trying to look smaller that I was sure he did at this time look all that much more tall and menacing.

The barred door was closed behind me. I turned to watch as the two men left and left me to what fate they were unsure would be. Though from the looks of my cellmate, Mr Lacy feared the worst.

"They call me Big Budd." My new roommate grinned as he hovered over me. Trying to look all the taller as he flexed.

"We're going to have a good time."

## 25. Chapter 25

I was cornered.

He had me trapped against the cell door. His hands gripping the bars tightly as he leaned in towards me. The mans breath smelt of rot, a bad sign to what he considered hygiene. The heat from that wretched stench sent a shiver through me. The hairs on the back of my neck standing as I tried to turn my face away from the smell.

"What a skinny prick like you do to get in here boy?" He was eyeing me all the way down to my feet and back up where he tried to catch my eyes.

My mind was already in a panic. My natural defenses kicking in as soon as I saw him.

Besides already hunching to look smaller, my eyes looked anywhere but his or his face. This I found out was taken as rude. One of his grimy hands moved and caught my chin, forcing it to turn to face him.

I continued to look elsewhere before clamping my eyes tightly shut.

"Are you trying to piss me off? Look at me boy!"

His grip tightened to the point I knew bruises would certainly form later.

Shaking my head as best I could in that vice grip, I slowly began to peak as I felt myself start to hyperventilate.

A malicious rotting smile greeted me as I teared up.

"That's better. Now answer my question Kid, why they put you in here?"

I swallowed roughly, wanting to let my eyes dart away. But as soon as I'd let them he'd slap me hard on the side of the face.

"Focus!"

"I...I..."

"He's accused of killing an officer in Derry, Maine."

Budd looked behind me, releasing me quickly before stepping back. A guard I hadn't met stood behind me as I put myself to the cell was beside the door.

Now free I looked back to the ground, continuing to try and look small.

"This twig?" Budd snorted.

"He was found on the scene having set the body and car on fire. Supposedly he had been harassing her."

"Yeah right, and I'm not in here for three accounts of murder. What a joke."

Budd still eyed me as he took to lying on his bed. Leaving me to shaking in my spot unmoving.

"Kid never got a trial. Now don't let me catch you man handling him again. Dinner will be soon and I will not resist telling Cookie you can't have your extra desert nor the standard. We clear?"

"Yeah yeah." Budd grumbled closing his eyes with his hands behind his head.

He didn't move from his position while the guard left nor did he move after. Myself still too much in shook to even think let alone move.

It took the door unlocking to alert me time had passed and food would now be being served.

Budd walked past me, eyeing me with a grin as he took up as much space as he could on his way out.

It was only when I felt sure he and any other possible threat was gone from the immediate area that I made my own way out of the cell and down to the cafeteria part of this section of the prison.

Heads turned and popped up to watch me. All in different stages of eating or getting ready to. I kept my head down as I followed the line that was formed to receive our portions. The staring continuing even as it became my turn to receive my meal for the evening.

It was nothing spectacular nor was it quit to the point of nauseating. It was less then standard and I wondered if this was intentional on the prisons part or the states. My face scrunched at seeing what I barely called edible portions. I wouldn't need to worry at the taste for long for as soon as I found the most remote part Budd reappeared and had his group of fellow inmates he called 'friends' with him.

"Alright twig, time you pay for your protection. If you want me to not beat your ass or let any others then better fork over the best foods."

Before I could even affirm or deny his offer he was grabbing at my good. Budd went straight for the dessert before grabbing whatever meat was put on my tray. By the end he left only my apple and bread.

"This'll do for now. But you better start getting other ways to pay as well. This is the discount for new blood. Better get moving on it twig."

He chuckled stuffing his face with my food and heading off with his gang, all laughing after him as they left.

I didn't have the will to fight at this time. The shock from the sudden change leaving me feeling dazed and disoriented. Was this really my new existence?

As I ate my bread slowly I focused inward for any word or even sign from IT. I could feel IT seething below the surface but eerily quiet.

"You're plotting aren't you?"

'Yesssss...' IT hissed in a deep growl. 'Must find a way to pick off the weakest and make it to the top...' he purred quite pleased.

"Y..you'll only kill those who deserve it...right?"

'Who deserves it in your mind Bobby? Only those who have committed murder? Theft too far? What of those who have done such horrible things to those so pure and innocent?'

"You..you can read my mind...that is what I prefer."

I almost expected him to protest, but instead after a short time of silence, 'I will respect your wishes for now... Tonight I shall feed. The short one there...'

I looked carefully where he said, knowing without anymore of a direction. There sat a short man, barely as tall as my own chest. He was laughing away with the others around him, about I am unsure.

'He deals in drugs. He sold them to youths even after he found his last batch was laced with something that would kill them. He will be the first. Simple. Weak. Forgettable.'

His logic was sound and I could feel my mouth water as he spoke of his plan for tonight. The bread growing moist before I even noticed.

'Sometime after lights out we shall go...you can sleep, let me take the helm. Make it easier on yourself Bobby.'

I shallowed almost nodding, "I..I'd prefer that, please."

I felt a calm come over me upon agreeing with him.

'It's too soon for you...still remembering so much...Pennywise will take care of it all. Make him float nice and high.'

## 26. Chapter 26

"I don't think this is a good idea..."

"Nonsense Bobby. His bigger then me and you're bigger then him. All you have to do is tell him to stop picking on me. It's sure to work."

I sighed deeply as I helped Linda put on her pink backpack. Her smile wasn't helping me feel any better. The idea of picking on a kid, even one larger then her that had been teasing and at times even hitting her didn't settle well for me.

"I'll think about it... but I really think you should tell one of the teachers. They should be able to talk to him and if he doesn't stop they'll call his parents."

"The jerk doesn't listen to 'em or the teachers. He brags about it all the time. You've heard him. He always waits until you are getting something for me to pick on me, not this time. This is the last straw. I'm doing being miss nice girl."

Linda gripped the straps with a determined smirk.

"You'll hide and watch and when he starts to pick on me pop out and confront him."

I couldn't stop the frown forming on my face, but I nodded and agreed to the plan anyways.

We grabbed our bikes and headed toward school. It didn't take long for us to get there, locking the bikes at the front in the designated racks, before we headed in.

It was peaceful for much of the time, that is until recess came along and Linda's plan went into affect. I followed her out to where we couldn't be seen well by any teachers before going to hide else where while she waited for her tormentor to arrive.

It felt like only yesterday I had met Linda, but she had grown so much in that time. It had to be at least five years and she had grown taller and braver as time went on. Myself I seemed to go in the

opposite direction. Mostly my worry for her and what would happen if I wasn't there. The only reason I was agreeing to this whole thing was because she was the one to ask me. I sighed heavily, squatting low in the bushes. Odd feeling like I had done something like often in the past. I shook it off before I could let it get under my skin. The 'doofus' as Linda called him was approaching.

I listened carefully in, waiting for my signal from Linda to enter in to tell the bully off, but that all went out the window when I saw him suddenly hit and then proceed to push Linda to the ground.

A rage seemed to take over me as I rushed towards them faster then I ever imagined I could. There were screams as the rest of his gang scattered. Running in all directions as I appeared out of nowhere it seemed, grabbing the leader tightly by both his arms. A snarl coming from deep within me as I glared deeply at him.

'Delicious fear....'

I could make out the sudden smell of ammonia as I looked down to see that he had wet himself. I very pleased grin appearing on my face. The smell of iron mixing in as I felt warm liquid soak my fingers. My nails having dug deep into his arms drawing blood. A salty smell adding to the mix as I heard sobs, tears flowing like rivers from his eyes.

"P...please... do...don't hurt me... Mr... Mr Cl... cloo..."

"Bobby?"

All hate and anger left me, concern taking hold as I heard my name called in a daze. Shoving the boy away as I leant down to meet Linda, taking her gently into my arms, holding her close.

"Shh, I'm here. Are you alright little one?"

"I... I think so... My face and head hurt..." She whined, sniffing as she tried not to cry in my arms.

"It'll be alright. We're going to the nurse and see about getting you home early to rest." I soothed, standing with her cradled close to me.



"What about Doofus?" She asked with heavy lidded eyes.

"He won't bother you anymore. I promise." I felt like I wanted to kill the kid before Linda had snapped me out of my rage. I couldn't do that to her. Kill a child and leave her all alone. She'd be so frightened of me if I ever did something like that.

"W... was there a clown?"

My brows rose at her odd question.

"A clown? No... why would you ask that little one?"

She seemed to pause in thought before burying her face into my chest.

"I thought I saw one as I woke up... but then it disappeared and you were there..." She sighed holding onto me tightly, hugging me as she put all her trust into me.

"No clowns here Lin... but if you like we could see a circus soon... would you like that?"

I could see a grin form on her lips as I peeked down at her. I could feel her nod before she answered.

"I'd like that... we can get popcorn... right?"

"Yes, of course. POP POP POP!"

She burst into laughter at my over the top enthusiasm for the food.

"You're so silly Bobby... I like that... don't ever grow up like everyone else... Don't become an old grumpy man... I never want to be an old grumpy person. I want to be happy and have fun. I know I gotta grow up... but it doesn't mean I have to be a prune."

"Nor will I. I promise. No prunes here. Just two young hip adults." I chuckled giving her a hug.

"I won't grow old now will I?"

Her voice sounded older, sadder.

"We all grow old Lin..."

"Not when we're dead..."

I froze, my heart feeling it has stopped in my chest. I'm afraid to look, but know I must. As I look down, there is no longer a ten year old Linda in my arms. My chest tightens upon seeing the burnt corpse I'd pulled from the car. Her eyes open, untouched, as she stares up at me.

"I won't grow old now... no husband... no children... perhaps it is best. He'd only hunt them down and eat them..."

I look where she is staring now in confusion.  
Pennywise grins holding a large group of balloons, waving at us both.

When I look back to her she's gone. My arms empty as I jump startled. Looking about frantically for her.

"LINDA! LIN!" I'm hyperventilating as I feel the all too hot tears fall down my cheeks. "LIN...!"

I feel myself tackled to the ground, a great weight being pressed upon my throat. The air being cut off as I stare up in horror as Pennywise hovers over me, choking me as he uses his weight to keep me pinned to the ground.

"Why don't you just die!"

I gasp as my vision blurs. Scrapping at the wrists of the clown slowly killing me.

"Shh, just let it happen you freak! You messed with wrong guy." The darkness crawls into my vision.

The image of Pennywise fading as I begin to make out the man Pennywise was meant to kill tonight. I was dreaming! But now... this part wasn't a dream. I was being suffocated by a crazed man trying to protect himself.

How was this happening? Penny said he'd leave me out of this. Why was I here?

"That cop must have been one weak bitch for you to kill her."

Laughter echoes in my ears.

What did he just call Linda?

A snarl makes it from me as I grip hard to the mans wrists. I hear snapping and a sharp cry as I pry his hands from my throat taking in deep breathes, frightfully calm ones, as my vision clears and I stare glaring into the man's eyes.

"What did you just call her?" I can hear a growl building as I speak.

"B... bitch..." The man is horrified by my sudden strength. I twist my hands sudden and sharply. A scream coming from the man that I easily cut short dropping his wrists and grabbing his throat and mouth.

"I was going to let you die quickly, but now... I don't think I shall be so kind." The smell of fear grows stronger and wafts to my senses as I see him begin to panic. He struggles, but is unable to free himself from my grasp. The smell of ammonia hits the air as he wets himself. My nails become like claws digging into his face and neck. The smell of Iron joining in.

"Here comes a candle to light to bed..."

He's eyeing me confused, but I no longer care.

"And here comes a chopper to chop off your head!"

I'm growing in size, taller I go, longer I stretch in limbs.

"Chip chop chip chop..."

I can feel him screaming behind my hand as I grin from above him.

"...the last man is dead."

## 27. Chapter 27

"Up! Get Up! Time for breakfast!"

The sound of cell doors opening rang through out the halls of the prison. The sound louder then I remembered it before. A pained moan left me as I went to cover my ears, finding I already had my pillow on top of my head, covering my ears and supposedly muffling the sound already. I groaned to imagine what it would be like after I removed the pillow. I wasn't wrong.

Along with the noise joined the brightest light I had ever seen. Closing my eyes quickly as I covered them quickly. Struggling which would be better, to cover my sensitive eyes, or my throbbing ears.

I didn't feel as hungry as I thought I would as I shuffled my way to the door and out into the hall towards the cafeteria.

"Did you hear, that drug dealer that got all those kids killed, he disappeared last night."

I turned my head slightly as I listened to the men in line behind me talking. They were so quiet, I don't know how I could have heard them from here.

"There was nothing left. Nothing! Someone said they thought they heard shouting last night, like a scuffle, but this morning there wasn't a trace of fight. There wasn't even evidence that he got out of his sell on his own. They're questioning all the guards to see if one of them might have lost a key. I doubt he's still alive. Most likely someone paid them off so they could kill him. Some parent probably paid one of the hitmen to do it."

Flashes of suddenly bombarded me of what really happened to the missing man last night. I had woke to him trying to choke me to death, but upon him insulting Linda... I killed him. My eyes widened as the memories returned. I had pushed them so far and down until this point. After I had been able to get up something had changed. I remembered growing in height. The smell of delicious fear on him as he watched me tower over him.

"WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME?!" I was frightened, but focused all the more on how upset that I had no control anymore. This wasn't supposed to be happening. Not for twenty seven more years. Wait, ... why would I think that?

'Nothing... I made it in just fine...'

"You dragged me along. You said I could stay behind to sleep."

'I never said stay behind. You slept... until you suddenly woke... a nightmare...such a human weakness...' He grumbled. If I could see him I was sure he would be scrunching his face in frustration and shaking about enough to ring his bells quite loudly. I could almost hear them as I imagined it.

"Then... how did I end up there? Why did I suddenly..."

'You haven't remembered yet?' Pennywise sounded a bit amused. 'I thought perhaps you had remembered after last night...' He sounded so giddy at my misery. 'Though you did seem to fade as soon as you took the first bite.'

"P...pardon?"

'First bite. He was so delicious. His screams of fear only grew all the more as we held him down and ate his arm. His sobs muffled as we held his mouth shut tight.'

I felt myself grow dizzy as I took my tray of food and rushed to take a seat. He was telling me I had been there and we had both taken a bite out of that awful man? Placing my tray aside, I leaned on the table, feeling myself shake as my breathing picked up. I had to be losing it. I would never had done what he was saying. Never... right?

It felt like Pennywise was poking around my mind, looking for something, but he didn't find it. A frustrated noise coming from him as I closed my eyes, trying to calm down.

"Bobby, what's wrong?"

My eyes shot wide open as I looked from where I was hearing the voice. It was one I had known for over twenty seven years. I didn't

believe I would hear it again.

"Hey there softy." Linda grinned sitting next to me. She was no longer a burnt corpse. She was whole and beautiful as she had been before she had been killed.

My gut reaction to look about to see if I was crazy or she was really here. From the looks or better yet lack there of it was obvious to me I was going insane.

"I know that look and no, you're not going nuts." She grinned, reaching out to brush at my hair. Her slim fingers ghosting through them, causing a frown on both our faces. "Well... that was just disappointing." She sighed, looking at her hands sadly. "He said there would be limitations..."

My mouth opened to ask, but I stopped before I started. I didn't wish to add crazy guy that talks to self to my list of reasons why people would pick on me here. Thankfully Linda picked up on it.

"I know, it's alright. I can hear you just fine if you think to me." She smile returning. "All of you."

I looked at her confused as I suddenly hear Penny's response.

'He sent you didn't he? He's doing this to mock me now? Send the only child I didn't wish to kill and eat to mock and torment me. You are not really here. The dead die and disappear. Only shells left to decay and feed the weeds.'

"Hush now. You know better then to think Maturin would do that."

I wanted to question who this Maturin was, but didn't get the chance.

'He keeps trying to stop me from enjoying myself....' Pennywise grumbled.

"Well, I'm not going to get into that here. We have little time to get you back to Derry before that asshole tares it apart and kills your friends. Bill needs you Bobby. He's trying his best to find who did this to me, but if he figures it out..."

"We can't let him... he'll end up dead as well... before I can even get to him and keep him and the others safe."

"Exactly." She looked sad taking in how right we both were. "Why we have to hurry up and get you to tip top shape." Linda rose to her feet and stretched, more out of habit then need from what I could tell.

"Are you a ghost Lin?" Even the voice from my head cracked from my upset. Steering away from what she was talking about. Deal what was needed.

"Actually... I'm not too sure... you can see me, but no one else. I can't touch you... perhaps in a way I am a type of ghost... Last I remember was being shot. That.. that sleazy asshole standing over me before taking the finale shot." She was seething as I took her words in.

My head whipped to look at her in shock, "You saw who killed you?"

I had made an error in my moment of shock. I had not only spoken out loud, but I had also caught the attention of my fellow prison mates. The room feel silent as they all seemed to turn to look at me in confusion, glares, and some as if they were sizing my up for a coffin after they beat my ass to death. I blinked rapidly and turned back to my food.

"You saw who killed you Lin?"

"Yes... though I wasn't given the time to warn you... and had no idea what he was even as I watched him kill me. The last thing going through my mind was, who's going to look after Bobby. He's going to be so lost with out me. Sadly I was right... but not in the way I thought."

She sighed, taking a seat, placing her hand on my own. Hovering over it, unable to take it and sooth me as she had so much of her life.

"Maturin showed me... what happened after you found me... I think that what he saw... that is why he was willing to send me to help you... offer his own help as well if you aren't stubborn about it." She laughed lightly as if it was long known joke.

I looked confused, but Pennywise appeared to know all too well what

she was talking about. A deep growl coming from my chest that I wasn't in control of.

"Don't, I am not trying to upset you." The growl quieting under her soothing words. "It was meant to be a light joke. Nothing more. I know you get that." She smiled softly, looking into my eyes. "Let's focus on what all of us want for now. To kill that thing that killed me and framed you before he can destroy what is left of our town. Cause no matter what I have learned, I still love you Bobby."

I looked up at her more closely, hearing her talking to me now. "You have meant so much to me since the day we met and that hasn't changed. Only gotten stronger. Now let me help you. I've never tricked you or done anything to harm you before. So don't start thinking I will now, just because I am here with Maturin's help."

I felt confused why she would think I was upset by her helping this Maturin guy help us. Though I was more confused when I heard the purring coming from me.

"That's what I thought." She looked so sad as her hand continued to hover over my hand. I could tell how she felt and how I wished I could hug her and she me in return. I slowly noticed the fact I was crying. Trying to hide it from those around me. I didn't care if I cried in front of Linda, but these men who could use it as an excuse to attack me. Not a chance.

I no longer had an appetite. It had long left me since I remembered the night before. It was a haze after I decided to attack the man myself. I didn't remember what Pennywise told me we had done. Only flashes of red, muffled screams, and nothing much more.

"I know that look. You're trying to remember... Bobby, don't try too hard to. You'll only give yourself a head and headache. You're not ready to remember more than what you do right now. Trust me. In good time. Now try and eat a bit of food. You need it still." Linda eyed my food softly, urging me to go on and take a bite.

With a heavy sigh, I decide to pick at the bread. Only getting a few bites in before I hear a voice I rather avoid the body of which it belonged to right now.



"Hey cellmate, time to pay the protection bill. Fork over the food."

## 28. Chapter 28

"Bobby hurry up!" Linda screamed from the living room. Was seated, looking over the back of the couch into the kitchen.

"They're gonna land before you're done popping that popcorn you goof!"

The bright grin she gave was contagious, even with the teasing that came with it. As Bobby came over from the kitchen holding two large bowls of popcorn, his own smile began to form as he chuckled at the young girls excitement and teasing.

"Yes yes, I know. But they haven't yet and so no need to rush me Lin, or is it that you don't want any popcorn?"

"Hey, wait a minute, you that's not part of the deal! You promised me popcorn if I get the root beers from the garage and put them in the fridge to cool in time. I held up my part of the bargain, you hold up your's mister."

"Yes, yes, but I find you rushing me may end with your's all over the floor..." Bobby grinned mischievously as he began placing the two bowls down on the coffee table in front of the couch.

"Though I think we both would rather sit and enjoy the experience and not be cleaning up during it. Now give me a moment to grab those root beers you so graciously collected and cooled for us and then we both can sit and watch the landing."

Linda snorted, turning to face the TV before Bobby could return once more for the kitchen with the two cold bottles of Robert Grey's Root Beer.

"Alright, now we have our drinks as well as our snacks. We aren't missing anything else are we? Don't want get up and miss anything cause you rushed me and forgot something do we?"

"No, no we don't." Linda snorted rolling her eyes before taking her bowl of popcorn. With her own mischievous grin, she grabbed a handful of popcorn and tossed it at Bobby's head.

Though she didn't expect what happened as he caught it all in one mouth full. A huge grin as he chewed it, taking his seat beside her and his own bowl into his lap.

"How the Hell do you do that?"

"Language Lin and it's a talent. Nothing more." He chuckled taking a handful of his own popcorn and munching on it as he faced the Tv.

Linda merely rolled her eyes at his comment of language before turning to face the TV as well.

"What time did they say they should be landing?"

Bobby looked to the clock on the wall over the back of the couch, "Around two our time I believe. Though I don't think they'll be on time. It has to take some time to line before they can land."

Linda merely nodded as she watched the news feed as they both waited. Idly popping another piece of popcorn into her mouth.

Today was the day man would make it's biggest achievement yet. Apollo 11 would make it's way to the moon's surface. Once landed, it would be the first time anyone had set foot on the moon. Something that had only been a fantasy, a mere dream, now would become history.

"Why do human's feel this is such a great thing?"

Bobby's widened before turning from the TV to stare past Linda, to the other side of the couch.

The Pennywise sat hunched forward, drooling as he snarked. Giving a disgusted look at the Television as it changed to show man's first step on the moon.

"I have traveled beyond their small planet and moon. Seen other worlds and galaxies ages before they could even dream of their mechanical transportations. This is but a grain of sand, if even that on the beach of the ocean of the universe."

Bobby looked cautiously away from the clown to check on Linda. To his confusion she didn't even notice their sudden guest.

When he looked back to the clown, IT was staring right at him, unblinking.

"Why this memory?" IT snarked.

Bobby looked back to Linda before facing the TV as he gave his honest response.

"It was one of the last times I was more the parent... that she looked up to me as someone that knew everything... that she loved me as if I was her own..."

Pennywise hummed, a low rumble in it's jest as he thought this response over.

"She grew up soon after..."

"Her parents weren't around as often... she matured faster then others her age... she no longer was that little girl... she became a woman before my very eyes."

As if to make a point, Linda appeared in her late teens when he looked to her once more.

Bobby frowned, his confidence leaving, his posture slumping. Looking all the more like the weak man he currently did.

"We had to be careful. She was smarter now. She would notice things. Put them together. We had to play more like the prey." Pennywise hummed, appearing in front of Linda, crouched on the coffee table. He stared deeply at her, reaching a gloved hand out to touch her cheek. Where it would be harsh with anyone else, clawed and ready to tear apart upon contact, here it was gentle. He stroked her cheek softly. Bright glowing blue eyes lost in deep thought.

"Couldn't risk it...Only human we loved... no... no we couldn't."

"Like a daughter we didn't have." Bobby spoke low watching the interaction.

"Then a sister we wish we had." Pennywise purred softly.

Linda's smile changed slowly to one of pain and anguish. Wounds appeared on her person before flames licked at her form. Only her burning in a silent scream.

Pennywise snarled. Were those tears?

"We kill the invader. Destroy him. Make him suffer and know what it means to take what is ours!" The clown turned to look at Bobby, eyes bright red and glowing. Fangs having formed in IT's rage. "We must remember it all to do it. Remember everything!"

Bobby didn't feel fear. He didn't feel disgust. Only a shared rage.  
"For her...help me remember..."

Pennywise climbed down from the coffee table, his long legs looking odd being so much taller than the table itself.

Bobby stood, both reaching their full heights as they faced one another. Each now towering as equals. Identical in everything but features.

"For Lin..." They spoke almost in unison. Each reaching out to take the others hands in theirs. As if facing a mirror.

"For the Losers..." Their hands seemed to begin to melt together. Neither joining faster than the other as they began to conjoin.

"To protect our town..." They spoke in perfect unison. Their bodies now one.

Not they. IT was never a they or a we. Only a IT.

What had once looked like a weak man, now stood a tall wilder looking Robert Grey. His hair no longer kept and short, now somehow longer and wilder. He looked down at his hand, stretching and clenching it. Its form changing from human, to glove, to clawed and back.

A menacing grin appearing upon his face as his once human looking eyes glowed bright yellow. Testing his mouth as it morphed from a human's, to that of monsters full of razored teeth and back. His smile only grew.

"Tonight I shall feed well upon the rotten flesh kept here. Then once done, perhaps a bit of fun before leaving..." an unsettling giggle coming from him as his nose wrinkled in his laughter. A faint jingle as he shook.

"Oh what fun I'll have!" He danced about and leapt onto the coffee table.

"But first!" He looked about the room he stood in. "Must wake up. Can't have any fun asleep." He pouted, the world around him fading to black like myst before a new view came from slowly opening eyes.

Linda stood staring down at him. A look of worry and uncertainty. The cell replacing the once happy home they had lived in. She looked relieved to see him awake. In turn a huge grin coming to his own features.

"Liiiiiinnnnndaaaa." He purred with a happy tone.

Her smile seemed to sadden a bit, but did not leave her.

"You're awake ... and whole... correct?"

He nodded, shooting straight up, looking about the room before jumping up to explore. Everything more detailed then before. Light, color, sounds, smells, everything tenfold.

"Hey, finally up you cop killer?"

Oh this was going to be quite fun.

## 29. Chapter 29

"Yooooooooou talk too much!" I pronounced the ch hard as I twirled on my feet to face my roommate. Only stopping once I faced him in a straight stance with hands behind my back and feet pointing outward. A lethal grin spread on my face as I leans forward to meet his height.

I could see a shiver go down his spin as I watched him with a predatory gaze. He was too bewildered by my sudden change in personality to understand why he suddenly felt a rush of fear fill his very being, but oh how I could smell it. In my starvation, not even quenched by the late night meal of the previous night, I could feel the drool begin to collect in my mouth before making its way out to my lower lip.

"W..what the hell is wrong with you?"

"Wrong with me?" I let out bubbly laughter as I shook the involve bells around me, ringing playfully as I scrunched my nose in my fit of joy.

"Nothing is wrong with me. Not anymore."

Budd backed up, looking to the door before trying to run. It was so easy to appear in the door way an instant before he looked again. The scream that escaped him sent please take shivers through, causing me such delight.

"How... how the hell did you do that?" He voice rose with each word in his panic. He would be shouting all too much very soon and I couldn't have that.

"Budd, go to sleep." I popped the p gleefully. His eyes closing instantly as his body went limp and his whole weight hit the floor.

Cocking my head I looked at him curiously before deciding in certainty I'd save him for last.

Spinning around, hands still behind my back I took long steps out of

the shared cell.

As I made my way to the nearest guard, not a single eye turned towards me, it was as if I was invisible though clearly still there. They would look back and see how I was still there and what took place would never be connected to me.

I leaned forward in front of the closest guard. He gave no reaction as I did so, my head beside his own, close enough to whisper unheard by others. Though I had no worries, even if I had shouted what I said next, no one would have appeared to hear me.

"Officer, it appears the inmates and fellow guards have somehow become zombies. You better deal with it swiftly before they can escape and infect the populace."

The man's eyes grew wide as they grew wild with fear. Delusions of monsters replacing the living with the dead. Guards once dumping standing guard now appeared as dead staring into the distance or wandering back and forth in a mindless loop. Inmates eating their morning meals now appeared to be devouring the once living. Pulling and tearing at flesh to get deep inside the cavities to pull out organs. Crushing ribs, skulls, femurs, anything to get to something they could devour.

Sweat began to build on the man's brow as he rushed to hit the lock down for this wing of the prison. Fellow guardsman turning towards him as the alarms blared of a what would have been a nonexistent threat. But soon changed as the delusions guard watch in horror as all the undead looked at him, many beginning to approach in different forms of decay.

"What's going on?"

"Why are we locked down?"

"What's the threat?"

With confusion building, fear began filling the air as the unknown issue now became apparent as the hallucinating guard pulled out his side arm and pointed it at the nearest guard that had his attention on



him.

Without warning a loud bang rang out as red sprayed across the wall behind the approaching guardsman. The sound of a thud following as his lifeless form hit the ground.

A silent pause as shock came over them at what had just happened. Shortly broken by another bang as an inmate slumped over after painting the man beside him in red with bits of grey matter. Shouting and screams started as men rushed to stop the guard or try and find some form of cover.

Another shot rang out as another guard was too slow to draw his firearm. Another inmate. Then another.

With a final bang, my pawn fell.

He would not be the last.

I had already walked to another, whispering words of riot and anarchy breaking out below.

In less time then it took the last guard to build up to fire, he had already draw. His weapon on the inmates below, opening fire on those huddled away from the previous gunfire.

So I continued, with each fall of the last another followed. The smell of fear building and filling the whole wing.

Though I wished I could sit and take my time with each in private, I had no time to waste. This would be the quickest was to get the best and juiciest meals.

A little whisper, the power was cut to the whole wing. No cameras to catch what would happen next. A fire soon started, cutting of any escape to those left breathing.

As Bobby alone, I would have felt guilt for the guards that had and would lose their lives here. But as Pennywise once more in whole, I knew too well they were no innocents. Each man had a darkness here. A favorite inmate to torture, extort, beat or even worse.

So it would not weigh heavy on my mind that all here would die. Though the more my memory returned and lingered, the more I felt little for any of these humans. Only food to be gathered and eaten.

"Bobby you need to focus."

I whirled to face the voice with a snarl that died quickly as I saw her.

Linda was watching me with concern. Trying to remind me why I was doing this and what really mattered right now.

I couldn't help the huff as I shook my head in quite a pouting manner, "I know...I'm sorry."

She simply smiled at my apology, ignoring my outburst.

"It's alright. I interrupted your hunting. But you need to try and remember now and not let the fear let you forget. We don't have the time for you to linger. The rest of the prison is on alert to what is happening and more will come very soon. You must eat and finish this."

I nodded making my way to another guard, he was firing wildly into the crowd below when I leaned in and spoke softly, "fire will destroy them. Burn them."

He nodded taking my instructions to rush to disable the sprinkler system and proceed to start a fire. Tossing what fuel he could find into the crowd, he proceeded to fire a flare in to ignite what he saw as what was left of an undead hoard.

She smiled happily as he watched them burn.

But I couldn't allow him to enjoy it.

As soon as he turned from his work, he met my towering form. What he saw would have haunted him for years to come if I had let him live. A rotting corpse full of rats, bugs and decay gripping tightly to his throat as he squirmed wriggled and screamed. His fear filling my senses every time I breathed.

My rotting jaws opening wider than any living humans could have,

even if unhinged in death. As I brought his screaming face into my mouth. The last thing he smelt was the rot of death and decaying wriggling muscle of a tongue as the sounds of a bone rattling moaning wheeze of the undead surrounded him before the agonizing pressure was applied. A loud crunch with a satisfying pop sound filled my ears as the crimson liquid coated my tongue, flowing down the back of my throat. The state of fear soaked into the very cells as I swallowed it before chewing the crunchy and yet oh so chewy filling of grey matter inside.

No longer was I made ill from the action, let alone the mere thought of it as I released in every bite I took.

Once finished I merely moved onto the next, picking off those who feared the dead most.

When I was nearly full, I made my way back to the shared cell I occupied. Once again my human looking self, covered in the blood is spilled, I was quite surprised to find Budd wake and cowering in a corner.

"Time is short, or I'd enjoy the last of our time together longer." I ginned entering and crouching to his side, grabbing a fist full of clothing to pull him up.

"Any last words Budd?"

The man shook harder as he filled the cell with fear and the disgusting smell of piss.

"W...what are you man!"

"Oh, I'm Pennywise the Dancing Clown." I giggled and shook as the bells jingled as they appeared a long with my whole clown suit. My make up blooming out from the red on my nose.

Budd screamed, striking at me violently as he could. Kicking and hitting as tears formed.

His greatest fear had come true.

"You've been a very naughty boy Budd and now I've come to make

you pay. You should have took those dreams to heart Budd. A clown of death has finally caught up with you." I let out a fit of laughter and jingling as he wails and screams filled the air all the louder.

You see dear Budd here has always had a reoccurring nightmare. He would be caught in the arms of flesh eating clowns and eaten alive as they told him he had done something oh so very naughty.

Years passed and he grew to stop believing if he did anything wrong the clowns wouldn't find him, until one day he pushed it off as nothing more then a nightmare. Cause who ever heard of clowns eating someone before? Hehehehe, well besides me.

To bad for him he didn't pay head to his nightmares. But oh how juice and delicious did those fears make him now.